

HUMOR

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HUMOR

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Abraham Lincoln's Humor

Humor

- Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

Faked Lincoln Stories

(Don Marquis in The Saturday Evening Post)

IT WAS during this earlier period of my columnar aspirations that I developed a bad habit of inventing Lincoln stories. Lincoln was still a very lively personal memory ~~thirty years ago to some~~ of the older persons living in that part of the middle West (Illinois), and they were forever repeating anecdotes about him or stories that were attributed to him.

When I couldn't find anything better to fill up my column, I used to invent a story and attribute it to Lincoln, and some of these, I believe, are still in circulation. I was young and irresponsible in those days, with no perception that this might contribute to the falsification of a great historical character; I thought most of the Lincoln stories were invented by somebody else and I might as well have a hand in it, too.

And, indeed, I still wonder if as many as a quarter of the anecdotes attributed to Lincoln were really his. He couldn't have had much time for anything else if he told all of them.

NEW ORLEANS LA. ITEM

JAN. 2, 1929

Puck, Vol 1-1929

MARVELOUS MAN!

"I lived in Washington during the war," he remarked.

The hotel loungers looked at each other uneasily.

"In all that time," he pursued, "Lincoln never told me a story."

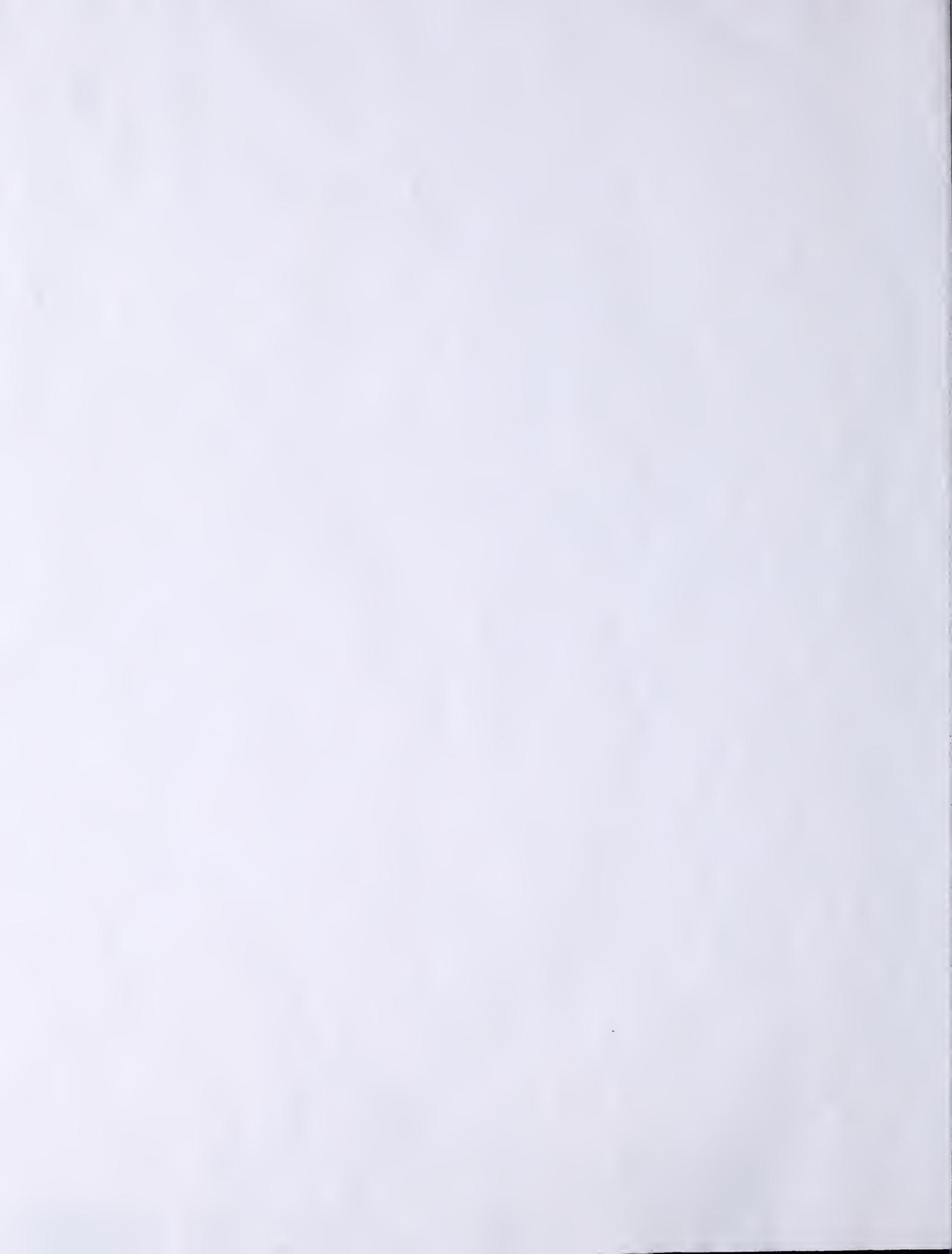
The hotel loungers gazed at him, and gazed and gazed.

AMERICAN LEVITY.

When President Cleveland made his hardy suggestion of war as a possible determiner of the boundary dispute, and when congress promptly approved the stand he had taken, the London Times passed some comments on the political levity of Americans. The same impression has been made upon Arthur J. Balfour, first lord of the British treasury, who thinks that a large section of the American people "appear to regard a war with England as a thing to be lightly indulged in, an exhilarating exercise, a gentle stimulus." Mr. Balfour is a man of no slight penetration, but he does not perfectly understand the people of this country. Their history is not that of a nation which turns to war as an amusement. They have never drawn the sword without deliberation, and never when they did not feel that a conflict was unavoidable. Even the Mexican war, the least defensible of their wars, seemed to be demanded, by obligations to their countrymen in Texas. The two contests with Great Britain in which this country has engaged, thrust upon her by continued oppression and insult, could not have been declined without baseness. The civil war was deferred again and again by compromise, though many statesmen and students of politics regarded it as inevitable; and it was already upon the country before the majority of citizens thought it possible.

A third struggle with Great Britain would be accepted by America only when every art known to upright diplomacy and every appeal commanded by fraternal regard and Christian morality had been exhausted. Perhaps the lightheartedness complained of would not exist did not America believe that England will choose some path of all that are left open to her rather than that which leads to bloodshed. But undoubtedly something dwells in the American genius which is often taken for levity. It is the foundation of its humor, and is one of the sources of its power. It is not essential levity; for some of the most serious characters in American history have revealed it. It was a part of the nature of Abraham Lincoln, and was often disclosed at the gravest stages of the tremendous struggle in which he was a leading figure. How often he would wrest himself away from the cares and the agonies of that period to indulge in some pleasantry or relate some facetious incident. Was he less earnest for that—less strong? Did he fail to appreciate the magnitude and horror of passing events? Or was it a sign and manifestation of his strength that he could relax the tenseness of his thought and the rigor of his soul to consider the humorous side of life and even some diverting phase of the stupendous panorama unrolling before him?

Lincoln was a representative of the American type, and with all its other qualities, represented its humor. The drama of civilization in North America, from its beginnings in pioneer days to its latest, ripest expressions, has been illuminated by that sense of life's incongruities and contradictions, that disposition to see its genial absurdities. The humor which has animated our literature is largely of that sort which plays around the most solemn and tragical experiences. It is the humor of earnest men, not to be mistaken for levity—the brief unbending of the most energetic race the world has known, the rebound of its genius from the great tasks which the Anglo-Saxon on this continent has set himself to perform. 1-17-1896



AMERICAN HUMOR.

It can hardly be said that the death of Edgar W. Nye has "eclipsed the gayety of nations," but the event is one to be regarded as a general misfortune, nevertheless. We could have better spared a hundred politicians than this one gracious and persevering jester. He was a source of relief and delight in the prevailing pressure of serious considerations. His quips and pranks served a purpose of unquestionable usefulness, and made him in a sense a public benefactor. He did not pretend to be a reformer or to have a mission, and yet he did more good than the majority of those who consecrate themselves to solemn tasks and look at life without perceiving its ludicrous aspects. Like all professional humorists, he had his times of monotony and repetition, and was not always able to appear at his best, but as a rule he was original and spontaneous, and succeeded oftener than he failed, which is a good deal to say of a funny man whose career lasted for fifteen years. There was no bitterness in his drollery. His satire was keen at times, but it was not malicious. He never made sport of sacred things, or of personal afflictions; and it was easy to detect in his apparently careless merriment a capacity for sympathy and tenderness. His gift was used with proper discretion, in other words, and to promote the happiness of the world.

The class of humorists to which Nye belonged may be claimed as a strictly American product. It represents certain national characteristics and tendencies, and is responsive to a definite national taste. The secret of its popularity lies in the fact that it appeals to the average mind in a direct and familiar style. Its methods are as simple as those of every-day conversation, and the effects that it produces are correspondingly quick and distinct. There is no study required to see where the laugh comes in; the point of the joke is not concealed to test the reader's cunning as an interpreter. It scorns all subterfuge and ambiguity, and "gets there" by the shortest possible route. This is a disadvantage so far as literary elegance is concerned, but there is compensation for the loss in an access of clearness and force. The play of fancy is transparent, and the object is accomplished without any waste of energy. It is like taking pictures by snap shot. The people are pleased with it, because it does not ask them to wait while it shows how skilfully words can be multiplied for ornamental purposes. It puts aside all ceremony, and amuses them by entirely plain and practical means.

This form of humor is unknown in any other country. We have it wholly to ourselves, and it seems to be possible only under the conditions which exist here. It has been evolved out of our own experience and progress as a people, and has no relation to foreign influences. The first settlers did not bring the germ of it with them from Europe, and would not have permitted it to live if they had found it hidden among their belongings. They were sadly destitute of the sense of humor. All of their ways were those of soberness and severity, and if one of them ever enjoyed a hearty laugh, history does not mention it. Many funny things must have happened in those days, but there is no reason to suppose that anybody observed them. The Puritan character was nothing if not indefatigably and unconditionally solemn. There was no room in its philosophy for the virtue of cheerfulness. The work of subduing the wilderness and the savages who inhabited it was not enlivened by any deviation from the rule of absolute seriousness. Life was viewed as a battle not only, but also as a penance. Perhaps that was best, considering the circumstances. It is not for the descendants of those grim and gnarled spirits, and the beneficiaries of their labors and sacrifices, to

impossible to believe that an infusion of humor would have made things much pleasant for them without reducing in the least their ability to render heroic and successful service.

There were some glimpses of humor during the revolutionary period, but they did not have any real significance. The common tone of thought and speech was grave and wearisome. Franklin was about the only public man who perpetrated a joke, and he was liked none the better for it. Hamilton and Jefferson were great, of course, but they did not know how to get the fun out of things; and Washington, with all of his wisdom, was similarly unfortunate. The statesmen of that era were addicted to a kind of stilted dignity that offered a shining mark for the shafts of ridicule, and nobody appears to have realized the absurdity of it. They said the most commonplace things in a high Roman fashion, and were fond of posing as heroic figures. It is a profound wonder that they were able to do so much talking upon so many topics without indulging in any pleasantry. The opportunities of humor were present in ample measure, but the faculty of improving them was lamentably absent, and this is one of the reasons why the history of that memorable epoch is not as interesting as it ought to be. We owe an immense debt to those who won our independence and founded our Government, but the fact remains that they were singularly defective in the matter of reasonable and wholesome jocularity.

The literature of those early times was principally religious and political, and the authors were as solemn as the statesmen. When Washington Irving returned from Europe, in 1806, with his head full of airy fancies and amusing suggestions, he decided to try the experiment of a serial publication intended "to instruct the young, reform the old, correct the town and castigate the age." His elder brother, William, and James K. Paulding joined him, and the result was "Salmagundi," which appeared in small 18mo. numbers from time to time during 1807. It was hailed with delight on account of its departure from the prevailing rule of dullness, and became a favorite throughout the whole country. Irving was thus encouraged to write his "Knickerbocker's History of New York" in 1809, which still retains a place among the leading works of American humor, although its style has been superseded by a different and more indigenous one. In speaking of it forty years later as "this haphazard production of my youth," he congratulated himself that its continued popularity proved that he had "struck the right chord," and certainly there has been a full realization of the hope with which the book closes that "Haply this frail compound of dust, which while alive may have given birth to naught but unprofitable weeds, may form a humble sod of the valley, whence may spring many a sweet wild flower to adorn my beloved island of Manna-hata!"

Irving must always be gratefully remembered for his service in this respect. He redeemed American literature from its besetting dreariness, and gave a start to the movement that has since added so much to the public stock of harmless pleasure. His humor was not strictly original and characteristic, but it filled a want and prepared the way for those who were to develop something more illustrative of our national life and character. He demonstrated that humorous writing could be made successful in spite of the apparent prejudice against it, and from that time forward there was a steady increase of such reading matter. His influence was perceptible not so much in the form of imitation as in the way of expansion and diversification. Other methods of reaching comical results were invented, and other kinds of material were utilized for that purpose. It was soon discovered that current events and experiences included a great deal of the comic, and that the humor

ist did not need to look beyond his own neighborhood for chances to exercise his talents. A broad, unworked field was opened for literary industry and enterprise; a new force was introduced for the improvement of the facilities of comfort and enjoyment.

Curiously enough, the most unique of the humorists of the first half of the present century did not appear in the localities of most education and refinement, but in the regions where the conditions were crude and people lived close to nature. The funniest of the funny books came from the South, including Longstreet's "Georgia Scenes," Hooper's "Simon Suggs," Baldwin's "Flush Times," Harris' "Sut Lovin-good," and Thorpe's "Scenes in Arkansaw." These volumes were made up of stories, mostly of real life, illustrating the various aspects of society and peculiarities of personal character. They are rarely seen nowadays, and the majority of readers know nothing about them; but in their time they had great popularity and decided literary significance. Some of them were first published in the New York "Spirit of the Times," edited by Col. William T. Porter, notably "The Quarter Race in Kentucky" and "The Big Bear of Arkansas," and others were contributed to the local papers, and afterward printed in book form. They were somewhat lacking in polish, but irresistibly amusing. The old South was represented in them with striking effect, and it would hardly be possible to write a satisfactory history of that section and era without drawing upon them for information about popular customs and proceedings.

When the first of Lowell's "Biglow Papers" appeared, it was evident that a new humorist of superior ability had arrived, and that the Yankee dialect which had been associated in the public mind only with psalms and prayers was henceforth to have a laughter-provoking suggestion attached to it. American humor was thereby lifted above the mere art of story-telling for the story's sake, and invested with a moral meaning. The Biglow style of merriment had a serious side. It was satire of the most telling kind, directed against slavery and the Mexican war. The author saw an opportunity to serve the cause of truth and justice by bringing the formidable power of ridicule to bear upon its enemies. He chose to clothe his verse in motley, not so much for popular amusement as for popular reproof and admonition. His aim was to simplify an important issue, and put men in the way of right thinking about it. The pleasure that he imparted was such as carried with it an appeal to conscience and a call to duty. It was humor applied to the solution of a problem of tremendous interest, instead of being calculated merely to give pleasure. The undertaking was justified by its success; the task was so well performed that a classic was added to literature, and it has not yet been surpassed.

There was still another variety of humor revealed in the case of Holmes. He differed from Lowell in temperament and in purpose. His impulses were all tolerant and generous, and he preferred mild to severe means of rectifying the mistakes and rebuking the sins of his fellow-men. He believed in all good things, and disbelieved in all bad things, but that did not prevent him from making due allowance for circumstances, and sympathizing with those who had burdens to bear and obstacles to overcome. "No one can read his books carefully," it has been well said, "without feeling that his mind was ceaselessly busy with the deep questions of life and thought, of duty and destiny"; and yet, he was uniformly kind, considerate and indulgent. He had faith in humanity, and his philosophy was optimistic. It often happened that he had to expose the littleness and meanness of society, but he always did it with a gentle touch that left no smart. He fully recognized the somber and terrible influences of heredity in the shaping of character, and

was not disposed to blame an individual for a fault that had probably or possibly been transmitted to him like a disease. It suited him better to praise than to accuse, to please than to offend. His cheerfulness was a fundamental quality of his nature, and not simply a form of literary expression. He employed humor in such a way as to make it easier for people to do right, and taught the salutary lesson that one may smile and smile, and yet not be a villain.

With the coming of Artemus Ward, our humor assumed an aspect for which there was no precedent, here or elsewhere. He was the originator of the sort of drollery that is distinctively American, and that seasons all of our literature. It is difficult to define any further than to say that it is extravagant, grotesque, fantastic; that it is no respecter of persons, and that it does not stop to select fine phrases. The logic of it pre-supposes, as Mr. Depew says, that when it touches the button you will do the best. It makes no provision for lack of the faculty of appreciation, and grants no time to those who are incapable of being suddenly amused. The progress that it has made must be accepted as a vindication of genuineness. It has come to stay, manifestly, which is only another way of saying that it is indispensable. We find it used in all the relations of life, and all the interests of society. It shocks us sometimes, and sometimes it makes us tired; but generally speaking, it is one of our best things, and we need more rather than less of it. The service that it performs is entirely consistent with all of the obligations and responsibilities of citizenship, and there is not the least danger that it will ever cause us to laugh too much for our own welfare and happiness.

We can well afford, therefore, to speak with pride and gratitude of those to whom we are indebted for this solace and blessing—the professional humorists whose works have diffused so much pleasure over the land. Artemus Ward stands at the head of the list indisputably, and when we speak of him we think of John Phoenix, Josh Billings, Petroleum V. Nasby, Mark Twain and others of the goodly company of masters of the revels. It is a great mistake to say that these men are not entitled to recognition as a force in literature. They have exerted a pronounced influence upon that agency of civilization. All kinds of books have been made more entertaining by reason of their service. They have laughed away much of the pedantic dullness that formerly characterized the writings of our authors of different classes. Thanks to them, a dry and heavy literary style is no longer a recommendation of wisdom. Their example has discredited monotony and compelled it to leaven itself with brightness. They have wrought a marked change in the public taste. The people have learned that it is possible for books to be written in an interesting way, no matter what the subject may be, and it is going to be more and more difficult for the author without humor to secure an audience.

HENRY KING.



"We went out on the back stoop and sat down and talked and talked"

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HE KNEW LINCOLN

BY IDA M. TARBELL

AUTHOR OF "LIFE OF LINCOLN," "HISTORY OF THE STANDARD OIL COMPANY," ETC.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY JAY HAMBIDGE



ID I know Lincoln? Well, I should say. See that chair there? Take it, set down. That's right. Comfortable, ain't it? Well, sir, Abraham Lincoln has set in that chair hours, him and Little 'Doug,' and Logan and Judge Davis, all of 'em, all the big men in this State, set in that chair. See them marks? Whittlin'. Judge Logan did it, all-firedest man to whittle. Always cuttin' away at something. I just got that chair new, paid six dollars for it, and I be blamed if I didn't come in this store and find him slashin' right into that arm. I picked up a stick and said: 'Here, Judge, s'posin' you cut this.' He just looked at me and then flounced out, mad as a wet hen. Mr. Lincoln was here, and you ought to heard him tee-hee. He was always here. Come and set by the stove by the hour and tell stories and talk and argue. I'd ruther heard the debates them men had around this old stove than heard Webster and Clay and Calhoun and the whole United States Senate. There wan't never no United States Senate that could beat just what I've heard right here in this room with Lincoln settin' in that very chair where you are this minute.

"He traded here. I've got his accounts now. See here, 'quinine, quinine, quinine.' Greatest hand to buy quinine you ever seen. Give it to his constituents. Oh, he

knew how to be popular, Mr. Lincoln did. Cutest man in politics. I wan't a Whig. I was then and I am now a Democrat, a real old-fashioned Jackson Democrat, and my blood just would rise up sometimes hearin' him discuss. He was a dangerous man—a durned dangerous man to have agin you. He'd make you think a thing when you knew it wan't so, and cute! Why, he'd just slide in when you wan't expectin' it and do some unexpected thing that just'd make you laugh, and then he'd get your vote. You'd vote for him because you liked him—just because you liked him and because he was so all-fired smart, and do it when you knew he was wrong and it was agin the interest of the country.

"Tell stories? Nobody ever could beat him at that, and how he'd enjoy 'em, just slap his hands on his knees and jump up and turn around and then set down, laughin' to kill. Greatest man to git new yarns that ever lived, always askin', 'Heard any new stories, Billy?' And if I had I'd trot 'em out, and how he'd laugh. Often and often when I've told him something new and he'd kin'a forgit how it went, he'd come in and say, 'Billy, how was that story you'se tellin' me?' and then I'd tell it all over.

"He was away a lot, you know, ridin' the circuit along with some right smart lawyers. They had great doin's. Nuthin' to do evenings but to set around the tavern stove tellin' stories. That was enough when Lin-

coln was there. They was all lost without him. Old Judge Davis was boss of that lot, and he never would settle down till Lincoln got around. I've heard 'em laugh lots of times how the Judge would fuss around and keep askin', 'Where's Mr. Lincoln, why don't Mr. Lincoln come? Somebody go and find Lincoln,' and when Lincoln came he would just settle back and get him started to yarning, and there they'd set half the night.

"When he got home he'd come right in here first time he was down town and tell me every blamed yarn he'd heard. Whole crowd would get in here sometimes and talk over the trip, and I tell you it was something to hear 'em laugh. You could tell how Lincoln kept things stirred up. He was so blamed quick. Ever hear Judge Weldon tell that story about what Lincoln said one day up to Bloomington when they was takin' up a subscription to buy Jim Wheeler a new pair of pants? No? Well, perhaps I oughten to tell it to you, ma says it ain't nice. It makes me mad to hear people objectin' to Mr. Lincoln's stories. Mebbe he did say words you wouldn't expect to hear at a church supper, but he never put no meanin' into 'em that wouldn't 'a' been fit for the minister to put into a sermon, and that's a blamed sight more'n you can say of a lot of stories I've heard some of the people tell who stick up their noses at Mr. Lincoln's yarns.

"Yes, sir, he used to keep things purty well stirred up on that circuit. That time I was a speakin' of he made Judge Davis real mad; it happened right in court and everybody got to gigglin' fit to kill. The Judge knew 'twas something Lincoln had said and he began to sputter.

"I am not going to stand this any longer, Mr. Lincoln, you're always disturbin' this court with your tomfoolery. I'm goin' to fine you. The clerk will fine Mr. Lincoln five dollars for disorderly conduct.' The boys said Lincoln never said a word; he just set lookin' down with his hand over his mouth, tryin' not to laugh. About a minute later the Judge, who was always on pins and needles till he knew all the fun that was goin' on, called up Weldon and whispered to him, 'What was that Lincoln said?' Weldon told him, and I'll be blamed if the Judge didn't giggle right out loud there in court. The joke was on him then, and he knew it, and soon as he got his face straight

he said, dignified like, 'The clerk may remit Mr. Lincoln's fine.'

"Yes, he was a mighty cute story-teller, but he knew what he was about tellin' 'em. I tell you he got more arguments out of stories than he did out of law books, and the queer part was you couldn't answer 'em—they just made you see it and you couldn't get around it. I'm a Democrat, but I'll be blamed if I didn't have to vote for Mr. Lincoln as President, couldn't help it, and it was all on account of that snake story of his' illustratin' the takin' of slavery into Kansas and Nebraska. Remember it? I heard him tell it in a speech once.

"'If I saw a pizen snake crawlin' in the road,' he says, 'I'd kill it with the first thing I could grab; but if I found it in bed with my children, I'd be mighty careful how I touched it fear I'd make it bite the children. If I found it in bed with somebody's else children I'd let them take care of it; but if I found somebody puttin' a whole batch of young snakes into an empty bed where mine or anybody's children was going to sleep pretty soon, I'd stop him from doin' it if I had to fight him.' Perhaps he didn't say 'fight him,' but somehow I always tell that story that way because I know I would and so would he or you or anybody. That was what it was all about when you come down to it. They was trying to put a batch of snakes into an empty bed that folks was goin' to sleep in.

"Before I heard that story I'd heard Lincoln say a hundred times, settin' right there in that chair, where you are, 'Boys, we've got to stop slavery or it's goin' to spread all over this country,' but, somehow, I didn't see it before. Them snakes finished me. Then I knew he'd got it right and I'd got to vote for him. Pretty tough, though, for me to go back on Little 'Doug.' You see he was our great man, so we thought. Been to the United States Senate and knew all the big bugs all over the country. Sort o' looked and talked great. Wan't no comparison between him and Lincoln in looks and talk. Of course, we all knew he wan't honest, like Lincoln, but blamed if I didn't think in them days Lincoln was too all-fired honest—kind of innocent honest. He couldn't stand it nohow to have things said that wan't so. He just felt plumb bad about lies. I remember once bein' in court over to Decatur when Mr. Lincoln was tryin' a case. There was a fellow agin him



"Come and set by the stove by the hour and tell stories and talk and argue"

that didn't have no prejudices against lyin' in a lawsuit, and he was tellin' how Lincoln had said this an' that, tryin' to mix up the jury. It was snowin' bad outside, and Mr. Lincoln had wet his feet and he was tryin' to dry 'em at the stove. He had pulled off one shoe and was sittin' there holdin' up his great big foot, his forehead all puckered up, listenin' to that ornery lawyer's lies. All at onct he jumped up and hopped right out into the middle of the court room.

"Now, Judge," he says, "that ain't fair. I didn't say no sich thing, and he knows I didn't. I ain't goin' to have this jury all fuddled up."

"You never see anything so funny in a court room as that big fellow standin' there in one stockin' foot, a shoe in his hand, talking so earnest. No, sir, he couldn't stand a lie.

"Think he was a big man then?" Nope—never did. Just as I said, we all thought Douglas was *our* big man. You know I felt kind of sorry for Lincoln when they began to talk about him for President. It seemed almost as if somebody was makin'

fun of him. He didn't look like a president. I never had seen one, but we had pictures of 'em, all of 'em from George Washington down, and they looked somehow as if they were different kind of timber from us. Leastwise that's always the way it struck me. Now Mr. Lincoln he was just like your own folks—no trouble to talk to him, no siree. Somehow you just settled down comfortable to visitin' the minute he come in. I couldn't imagine George Washington or Thomas Jefferson settin' here in that chair you're in tee-heein' over some blamed yarn of mine. None of us around town took much stock in his bein' elected at first—that is, none of the men, the women was different. They always believed in him, and used to say, "You mark my word, Mr. Lincoln will be president. He's just made for it, he's good, he's the best man ever lived and he ought to be president." I didn't see no logic in that then, but I dunno but there was some after all.

"It seems all right now though. I reckon I learned somethin' watchin' him be President—learned a lot—not that it made any difference in *him*. Funniest thing to see him goin' around in this town—not a mite changed—and the whole United States a watchin' him and the biggest men in the country runnin' after him and reporters hangin' around to talk to him and fellers makin' his pictures in ile and every other way. That didn't make no difference to him—only he didn't like bein' so busy he couldn't come in here much. He had a room over there in the Court House—room on that corner there. I never looked up that it wan't chuck full of people wantin' him. This old town was full of people all the time—delegations and committees and politicians and newspaper men. Only time I ever see Horace Greeley, he came in here to buy quinine. Mr. Lincoln sent him. Think of that, Horace Greeley buyin' quinine of *me*.

"No end of other great men around. He saw 'em all. Sometimes I used to step over and watch him—didn't bother him a mite to see a big man—not a mite. He'd jest shake hands and talk as easy and natural as if 'twas me—and he didn't do no struttin' either. Some of the fellers who come to see him looked as if *they* was goin' to be president, but Mr. Lincoln didn't put on any airs. No sir, and he didn't cut any of his old friends either. Tickled to death to see



"Horace Greeley, he came in here to buy quinine"



"Aunt Sally, you couldn't a done nuthin' which would have pleased me better!"

'em every time, and they all come—blamed if every old man and woman in Sangamon County didn't trot up here to see him. They'd all knowed him when he was keepin' store down to New Salem and swingin' a chain—surveyed lots of their towns for 'em—he had—and then he'd electioneered all over that county, too, so they just came in droves to bid him good-by. I was over there one day when old Aunt Sally Lowdy came in the door. Aunt Sally lived down near New Salem, and I expect she'd mended Mr. Lincoln's pants many a time; for all them old women down there just doted on him and took care of him as if he was their own boy. Well, Aunt Sally stood lookin' kind a scared seein' so many strangers and not knowin' precisely what to do, when Mr. Lincoln spied her. Quick as a wink he said, 'Excuse me, gentlemen,' and he just rushed over to that old woman and shook hands with both of his'n and says, 'Now, Aunt Sally, this is real kind of you to come and see me. How are you and how's Jake?' (Jake was her boy.) 'Come right over here,'

and he led her over, as if she was the biggest lady in Illinois, and says, 'Gentlemen, this is a good old friend of mine. She can make the best flapjacks you ever tasted, and she's baked 'em for me many a time.' Aunt Sally was jest as pink as a rosy, she was so tickled. And she says, 'Abe'—all the old folks in Sangamon called him Abe. They'd knowed him as a boy, but don't you believe anybody ever did up here. No, sir, we said Mr. Lincoln. He was like one of us, but he wan't no man to be over familiar with. 'Abe,' says Aunt Sally, 'I had to come and say good-bye. They say down our way they're goin' to kill you if they get you down to Washington, but I don't believe it. I just tell 'em you're too smart to let 'em git ahead of you that way. I thought I'd come and bring you a present, knit 'em myself,' and I'll be blamed if that old lady didn't pull out a great big pair of yarn socks and hand 'em to Mr. Lincoln.

"Well, sir, it was the funniest thing to see Mr. Lincoln's face pucker up and his eyes twinkle and twinkle. He took them socks



"He just talked to us that time out of his heart"

and held 'em up by the toes, one in each hand. They was the longest socks I ever see. 'The lady got my latitude and longitude 'bout right, didn't she, gentlemen?' he says, and then he laid 'em down and he took Aunt Sally's hand and he says tender-like, 'Aunt Sally, you couldn't a done nuthin' which would have pleased me better. I'll take 'em to Washington and wear 'em, and think of you when I do it.' And I declare he said it so first thing I knew I was almost blubberin', and I wan't the only one nuther, and I bet he did wear 'em in Washington. I can jest see him pullin' off his shoe and showin' them socks to Sumner or Seward or some other big bug that was botherin' him when he wanted to switch off on another subject and tellin' 'em the story about Aunt Sally and her flapjacks.

"Was there much talk about his bein' killed?" Well, there's an awful lot of fools in this world and when they don't git what they want they're always for killin' somebody. Mr. Lincoln never let on, but I reckon his mail was pretty lively readin' sometimes. He got pictures of gallows and pistols and other things and lots of threats, so they said. I don't think that worried him much. He was more bothered seein' old Buchanan givin' the game away. 'I wish I could have got down there before the horse was stole,' I heard him say onct in here, talkin' to some men. 'But I reckon I can find the tracks when I do git there.' It was his cabinet bothered him most, I always thought. He didn't know the men he'd got to take well enough. Didn't know how far he could count on 'em. He and Judge Gillespie and one or two others was in here one day sittin' by the stove talkin', and he says, 'Judge, I wisht I could take all you boys down to Washington with me, Democrats and all, and make a cabinet out of you. I'd know where every man would fit and we could git right down to work. Now, I've got to learn my men before I can do much.' 'Do you mean, Mr. Lincoln, you'd take a Democrat like Logan?' says the Judge, sort of shocked. 'Yes, sir, I would; I know Logan. He's agin me now and that's all right, but if we have trouble you can count on Logan to do the right thing by the country, and that's the kind of men I want—them as will do the right thing by the country. 'Tain't a question of Lincoln, or Democrat or Republican, Judge; it's a question of the country.'

"Of course he seemed pretty cheerful always. He wan't no man to show out all he felt. Lots of them little stuck-up chaps that came out here to talk to him said, solemn as owls, 'He don't realize the gravity of the situation.' Them's their words, 'gravity of the situation.' Think of that, Mr. Lincoln not realizing. They ought to heard him talk to us the night he went away. I'll never forget that speech—nor any man who heard it. I can see him now just how he looked, standin' there on the end of his car. He'd been shakin' hands with the crowd in the depot, laughing and talking, just like himself, but when he got onto that car he seemed suddint to be all changed. You never seen a face so sad in all the world. I tell you he had woe in his heart that minute, woe. He knew he was leavin' us for good, nuthin' else could explain the way he looked and what he said. He knew he never was comin' back alive. It was rainin' hard, but when we saw him standin' there in bare head, his great big eyes lookin' at us so lovin' and mournful, every man of us took off his hat, just as if he'd been in church. You never heard him make a speech, of course? You missed a lot. Curious voice. You could hear it away off—kind of shrill, but went right to your heart—and that night it sounded sadder than anything I ever heard. You know I always hear it to this day, nights when the wind howls around the house. Ma says it makes her nervous to hear me talk about him such nights, but I can't help it; just have to let out.

"He stood a minute lookin' at us, and then he began to talk. There ain't a man in this town that heard him that ever forgot what he said, but I don't believe there's a man that ever said it over out loud—he couldn't, without cryin'. He just talked to us that time out of his heart. Somehow we felt all of a suddint how we loved him and how he loved us. We hadn't taken any stock in all that talk about his bein' killed, but when he said he was goin' away not knowin' where or whether ever he would return I just got cold all over. I begun to see that minute and everybody did. The women all fell to sobbin' and a kind of groan went up, and when he asked us to pray for him I don't believe that there was a man in that crowd, whether he ever went to church in his life, that didn't want to drop right down on his marrow bones and ask the Lord to take care of Abraham Lincoln

and bring him back to us, where he belonged.

"Ever see him again?" Yes, onct down in Washington, summer of '64. Things was lookin' purty blue that summer. Didn't seem to be anybody who thought he'd git re-elected. Greeley was abusin' him in *The Tribune* for not makin' peace, and you know there was about half the North that always let Greeley do their thinkin' fer 'em. The war wan't comin' on at all—seemed as if they never would do nuthin'. Grant was hangin' on to Petersburg like a dog to a root, but it didn't seem to do any good. Same with Sherman, who was tryin' to take Atlanta. The country was just petered out with the everlastin' taxes an' fightin' an' dyin'. It wan't human nature to be patient any longer, and they just spit it out on Mr. Lincoln, and then, right on top of all the grumblin' and abusin', he up and made another draft. Course he was right, but I tell you nobody but a brave man would 'a' done such a thing at that minute; but he did it. It was hard on us out here. I tell you there wan't many houses in this country where there wan't mournin' goin' on. It didn't seem as if we *could* stand any more blood lettin'. Some of the boys round the State went down to see him about it. They came back lookin' pretty sheepish. Joe Medill, up to Chicago, told me about it onct. He said, 'We just told Mr. Lincoln we couldn't stand another draft. We was through sendin' men down to Petersburg to be killed in trenches. He didn't say nuthin'; just stood still, lookin' down till we'd all talked ourselves out; and then, after a while, he lifted up his head, and looked around at us, slow-like; and I tell you, Billy, I never knew till that minute that Abraham Lincoln could get mad clean through. He was just white, he was that mad. "Boys," he says, "you ought to be ashamed of yourselves. You're actin' like a lot of cowards. You've helped make this war, and you've got to help fight it. You go home and raise them men, and don't you dare come down here again blubberin' about what I tell you to do. I won't stan' it." We was so scared we never said a word. We just took our hats and went out like a lot of school boys. Talk about Abraham Lincoln bein' easy! When it didn't matter mebbe he was easy, but when it did you couldn't stir him any more'n you could a mountain.'

"Well, I kept hearin' about the trouble he was havin' with everybody, and I just made up my mind I'd go down and see him and swap yarns and tell him how we was all countin' on his gettin' home. Thought maybe it would cheer him up to know we set such store on his comin' home if they didn't want him for president. So I jest picked up and went right off. Ma was real good about my goin'. She says, 'I shouldn't wonder if 'twould do him good, William. And don't you ask him no questions about the war nor about politics. You just talk home to him and tell him some of them foolish stories of yourn.'

"Well, I had a brother in Washington, clerk in a department—awful set up 'cause he had an office—and when I got down there I told him I'd come to visit Mr. Lincoln. He says, 'William, be you a fool? Folks don't visit the President of the United States without an invitation, and he's too busy to see anybody but the very biggest people in this administration. Why, he don't even see me,' he says. Well, it made me huffy to hear him talk. 'Isaac,' I says, 'I don't wonder Mr. Lincoln don't see you. But it's different with me. Him and me is friends.'

"Well," he says, "you've got to have cards anyway." "Cards," I says, "what for? What kind?" "Why," he says, "visitin' cards—with your name on." "Well," I says, "it's come to a pretty pass if an old friend like me can't see Mr. Lincoln without sendin' him a piece of pasteboard. I'd be ashamed to do such a thing, Isaac Brown. Do you suppose he's forgotten me? Needs to see my name printed out to know who I am? You can't make me believe any such thing," and I walked right out of the room, and that night I footed it up to the Soldiers' Home where Mr. Lincoln was livin' then, right among the sick soldiers in their tents.

"There was lots of people settin' around in a little room, waitin' fer him, but there wan't anybody there I knowed, and I was feelin' a little funny when a door opened and out came little John Nicolay. He came from down this way, so I just went up and says, 'How'd you do, John; where's Mr. Lincoln?' Well, John didn't seem over glad to see me.

"Have you an appintment with Mr. Lincoln?" he says.

"No, sir," I says; "I ain't, and it ain't necessary. Mebbe it's all right and fittin'

for them as wants postoffices to have appointments, but I reckon Mr. Lincoln's old friends don't need 'em, so you just trot along, Johnnie, and tell him Billy Brown's here and see what he says.' Well, he kind a flushed up and set his lips together, but he knowed me, and so he went off. In about two minutes the door popped open and out came Mr. Lincoln, his face all lit up. He saw me first thing, and he laid hold of me and just shook my hands fit to kill. 'Billy,' he says, 'now I am glad to see you. Come right in. You're goin' to stay to supper with Mary and me.'

"Didn't I know it? Think bein' president would change him—not a mite. Well, he had a right smart lot of people to see, but soon as he was through we went out on the back stoop and sat down and talked and talked. He asked me about pretty nigh everybody in Springfield. I just let loose and told him about the weddin's and births and the funerals and the buildin', and I guess there wan't a yarn I heard in the three years and a half he'd been away that I didn't spin for him. Laugh—you ought to a heard him laugh—just did my heart good, for I could see what they'd been doin' to him. Always was a thin man, but, Lordy, he was thinner'n ever now, and his face was kind a drawn and gray—enough to make you cry.

"Well, we had supper and then talked some more, and about ten o'clock I started down town. Wanted me to stay all night, but I says to myself, 'Billy, don't you overdo it. You've cheered him up, and you better light out and let him remember it when he's tired.' So I said, 'Nope, Mr. Lincoln, can't, goin' back to Springfield to-morrow. Ma don't like to have me away and my boy ain't no great shakes keepin' store.' 'Billy,' he says, 'what did you come down here for?' 'I come to see you, Mr. Lincoln.' 'But you ain't asked me for anything, Billy. What is it? Out with it. Want a postoffice?' he said, gigglin', for he knowed I didn't. 'No, Mr. Lincoln, just wanted to see *you*—felt kind a lonesome—been so long since I'd seen you, and I was afraid I'd forgit some of them yarns if I didn't unload soon.'

"Well, sir, you ought to seen his face as he looked at me.

"'Billy Brown,' he says, slow-like, 'do you mean to tell me you came all the way from Springfield, Illinois, just to have a *visit*

with *me*, that you don't want an office for anybody, nor a pardon for anybody, that you ain't got no complaints in your pockets, nor any advice up your sleeve?'

"'Yes, sir,' I says, 'that's about it, and I'll be durned if I wouldn't go to *Europe* to see you, if I couldn't do it no other way, Mr. Lincoln.'

"Well, sir, I never was so astonished in my life. He just grabbed my hand and shook it nearly off, and the tears just poured down his face, and he says, 'Billy, you never'll know what good you done me. I'm homesick, Billy, just plumb homesick, and it seems as if this war never would be over. Many a night I can see the boys a-dyin' on the fields and can hear their mothers cryin' for 'em at home, and I can't help 'em, Billy. I have to send them down there. We've got to save the Union, Billy, we've got to.'

"'Course we have, Mr. Lincoln,' I says, cheerful as I could, 'course we have. Don't you worry. It's most over. You're goin' to be re-elected, and you and old Grant's goin' to finish this war mighty quick then. Just keep a stiff upper lip, Mr. Lincoln, and don't forget them yarns I told you.' And I started out. But seems as if he couldn't let me go. 'Wait a minute, Billy,' he says, 'till I get my hat and I'll walk a piece with you.' It was one of them still sweet-smellin' summer nights with no end of stars and you ain't no idee how pretty 'twas walkin' down the road. There was white tents showin' through the trees and every little way a tall soldier standin' stock still, a gun at his side. Made me feel mighty curious and solemn. By-and-by we come out of the trees to a sightly place where you could look all over Washington—see the Potomac and clean into Virginia. There was a bench there and we set down and after a while Mr. Lincoln he begun to talk. Well, sir, you or nobody ever heard anything like it. Blamed if he didn't tell me the whole thing—all about the war and the generals and Seward and Sumner and Congress and Greeley and the whole blamed lot. He just opened up his heart if I do say it. Seemed as if he'd come to a p'int where he must let out. I dunno how long we set there—must have been nigh morning, fer the stars begun to go out before he got up to go. 'Good-bye, Billy,' he says. 'You're the first person I ever unloaded onto, and I hope you won't think I'm a baby,' and

then we shook hands again, and I walked down to town and next day I come home.

"Tell you what he said? Nope, I can't. Can't talk about it somehow. Fact is, I never told anybody about what he said that night. Tried to tell ma onct, but she cried, so I give it up.

"Yes, that's the last time I seen him—last time alive.

"Wan't long after that things began to look better. War began to move right smart, and, soon as it did, there wan't no use talkin' about anybody else for President. I see that plain enough, and, just as I told him, he was re-elected, and him an' Grant finished up the war in a hurry. I tell you it was a great day out here when we heard Lee had surrendered. 'Twas just like gettin' converted to have the war over. Somehow the only thing I could think of was how glad Mr. Lincoln would be. Me and ma reckoned he'd come right out and make us a visit and get rested, and we began right off to make plans about the reception we'd give him—brass band—parade—speeches—fire-works—everything. Seems as if I couldn't think about anything else. I was comin' down to open the store one mornin', and all the way down I was plannin' how I'd decorate the windows and how I'd tie a flag on that old chair, when I see Hiram Jones comin' towards me. He looked so old and all bent over I didn't know what had happened. 'Hiram,' I says, 'what's the matter? Be you sick?'

"'Billy,' he says, and he couldn't hardly say it, 'Billy, they've killed Mr. Lincoln.'

"Well, I just turned cold all over, and then I flared up. 'Hiram Jones,' I says, 'you're lyin', you're crazy. How dare you tell me that? It ain't so.'

"'Don't, Billy,' he says, 'don't go on so. I ain't lyin'. It's so. He'll never come back, Billy. He's dead!' And he fell to sobbin' out loud right there in the street, and somehow I knew it was true.

"I come on down and opened the door. People must have paregoric and castor ile and liniment, no matter who dies; but I

didn't put up the shades. I just sat here and thought and thought and groaned and groaned. It seemed that day as if the country was plumb ruined and I didn't care much. All I could think of was *him*. He wan't goin' to come back. He wouldn't never sit here in that chair again. He was dead.

"For days and days 'twas awful here. Waitin' and waitin'. Seemed as if that funeral never would end. I couldn't bear to think of him bein' dragged around the country and havin' all that fuss made over him. He always hated fussin' so. Still, I s'pose I'd been mad if they hadn't done it. Seemed awful, though. I kind a felt that he belonged to us now, that they ought to bring him back and let us have him now they'd killed him.

"Of course they got here at last, and I must say it was pretty grand. All sorts of big bugs, Senators and Congressmen, and officers in grand uniforms and music and flags and crape. They certainly didn't spare no pains givin' him a funeral. Only we didn't want 'em. We wanted to bury him ourselves, but they wouldn't let us. I went over onct where they'd laid him out for folks to see. I reckon I won't tell you about that. I ain't never goin' to get that out of my mind. I wisht a million times I'd never seen him lyin' there black and changed—that I could only see him as he looked sayin' 'good-bye' to me up to the Soldiers' Home in Washington that night.

"Ma and me didn't go to the cemetery with 'em. I couldn't stan' it. Didn't seem right to have sich goin's on here at home where he belonged, for a man like him. But we go up often now, ma and me does, and talk about him. Blamed if it don't seem sometimes as if he was right there—might step out any minute and say, 'Hello, Billy, any new stories?'

"Yes, I knowed Abraham Lincoln; knowed him well; and I tell you there wan't never a better man made. Leastwise I don't want to know a better one. He just suited me—Abraham Lincoln did."

(The third chapter of Miss Tarbell's serial "The Tariff in Our Times" will appear in the March number. It will take up the tariff under Grant.)

Humorous Even in Discomfort.

"When Lincoln was on circuit in his lawyering days," said a Chicago veteran to the Pittsburg Gazette-Times, "he used to put up at some pretty bad taverus—taverns where, big as he was, by Crinus, he and the judges and the lawyers would have to sleep two and three in a bed. And what beds they were! Once, after a wretched night, Lincoln got up and walked to a notice on the wall that said, 'No smoking in the bedrooms.' He chuckled grimly. Then he took a pencil from his pocket and scribbled beneath the notice: 'The fleas don't like it.' "

1817

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

February 12, 1809, Hardin County, Kentucky

April 15, 1865, Washington, D. C.

San Francisco Chronicle 2-12-1927



MAN'S invention of laughter, if that could be called an invention, he counted among the most important. He would be, if he could, the poet of laughter. He would call laughter "the joyous, beautiful, universal evergreen of life."

He was thankful for printing, for books, by which even dead men can speak their ideas to centuries after them. He would have all men free and able to read. He spoke of shackles on the human mind, of the great mass of men wanting emancipation. He used the phrase "the slavery of the mind" as though there were a mass of white men in shackles as real, if not as visible, as the chains of black men. The discoveries and inventions inherited from the past were not for a special and privileged few—he spoke plainly as though all learning should be for all men, at least in opportunity. Of the time when printing and books first came into the world, he said: "It is very probable, almost certain, that the great mass of men at that time were utterly unconscious that their condition or their minds were capable of improvement. They not only looked upon the educated few as superior beings, but they supposed themselves to be naturally incapable of rising to equality. To emancipate the mind from this false underestimate of itself is the great task which printing came into the world to perform."

He stopped to take a look around, to compare the present world of men with the past, with the time when rulers and laws made it a crime for the great mass of men either to read or to own books. "It is difficult for us now and here to conceive how strong this slavery of the mind was, and how long it did of necessity take to break its shackles, and to get a habit of freedom of thought established." To this he had to add a hope of America. "A new country is most favorable—almost necessary—to the emancipation of thought, and the consequent advancement of civilization and the arts." —*From Carl Sandburg's "Abraham Lincoln."*

Lincoln-Grant 'Whisky Myth' Still Missile in Wet-Dry Fight

N.Y. Hera. Tribune

2/12/28

Although Its Authenticity
Repeatedly Has Been Dis-
proved, Story Still Bobs Up
as Dinner Oratory Flows

Cited as Drink Argument

Origin of Tale Traced to Ac-
count of Imaginary Ban-
quet Printed in "Herald"

By Charles T. White

The most famous Lincoln myth—a beloved vagabond in Lincoln literature—the one about the Emancipator upon a notable occasion declaring he would like to know Grant's brand of whisky, so that he could send a barrel to each of his generals, waxes stronger with the years.

It is paraded at every Lincoln dinner by some speaker not sure of other anecdotes serving, but confident that this one will, and it is used to crush the extreme dry by the anti-prohibitionist not sure of his economic ground or of his facts and figures.

"You will recall," says our wet friend, "that it was Lincoln himself who, when told by the drys that Grant's liquor drinking would bring ruin to the Union arms, said that he wished he could learn the name of the particular brand of whisky Grant used so that he might send a barrel to each of his generals."

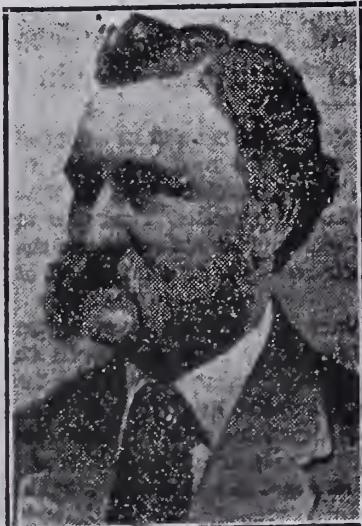
Usually Given Credence

That usually does its devastating work—the dry himself not being sure that Lincoln did not say it, but forced to admit that it sounds as if Lincoln might have coined the phrase on the spur of the moment to silence Grant's attackers.

Lincoln students for many years have been aware of the apocryphal character of the story when attributed to Lincoln, but inasmuch as Lincoln himself laughed at the patness of it it seems somewhat like a waste of time to apprehend the vagabond and attach an identification tag.

The credit of the origin of the quip, which has outlived the fame of its author, belongs to General Charles G. Halpine, of New York, who, as Miles O'Reilly, a correspondent of "The New York Herald," first gave currency to it in a dispatch to "The Herald" on November 26, 1863, from Washington. Halpine, or "O'Reilly," as he signed his contributions in "The Herald," being at the time on the staff of General Halleck, in command of the Union armies, with headquarters in Washington.

Wrote As Miles O'Reilly



Charles G. Halpine

Slapstick in Vogue

In order to account for Halpine's vogue it is useful to recall the standard of American humor at the period. At the time of the Civil War, and for some years before, humor was invested with a slapstick quality since nearly outgrown. "Josh Billings," "Artemus Ward," "Petroleum V. Nasby," "Miles O'Reilly" and others were the humor currency of the period. What they wrote, or spoke from the lecture platform, was quoted generally.

General Halpine perhaps was the most brilliant, or at least the best educated, of the humorists of his time. "The Life and Adventures of Private Miles O'Reilly" was a best seller for a considerable period during the war.

In the latter part of November, 1863, General Halpine wrote for "The New York Herald" a five-column narrative, wholly fictitious, captioned "Miles O'Reilly at the White House," wherein he made himself the guest of honor at a large function, with notables, from President Lincoln and Lord Lyons down, attending to him.

Where Quip Was Born

It was in this narrative, which, when it appeared in "The Herald," occupied a place of honor equal to that given the victory of the Union army at Chattanooga, that Halpine sprang his quip—or the germ of it—about Lincoln and Grant's whisky drinking. Halpine was an artist in painting with words a fictitious banquet, with plenty of drinking. Here is part of his dispatch describing the festivities in the White House:

"Colonel Hay, please touch the bell," said Mr. Lincoln, "and let Burgdorf, my messenger send us up the decanters and things. I have some French wines sent me from Paris by Secretary of Legation Pennington, whose tongue is so completely occupied in the business of tasting vintages that he has never had time to teach it French, though a resident in Paris many years. If you prefer whisky, I have some that can be relied upon—a present from Mr. Leslie Combs. I call it 'Grant's Particular,' and Halleck is about issuing an order that all his generals shall use it."

"To Health of Grant"

"With the news we have to-day from Chattanooga," said General Halleck gayly, "I think the country will indorse the order to which Mr. Lincoln has referred. For my own part, I'll take some of that whisky—just enough to drown a mosquito, Kelton—and, with the President's permission, our first toast will be the health of Ulysses Grant, the river-horse of the Mississippi!"

The narrative goes on to say: "Secretary Stanton seconded the toast in a neat and spirited address, Mr. Lincoln frequently applauding. The health was received with all the honors, every one present standing up while the liquor went down, and the company giving three cheers for General Grant, and

then three more, and then three after that to top off with."

The story of Miles O'Reilly at the White House, with details and colorful trimmings, was wholly imaginary. But the story "caught on" with a vengeance all over the country. The victory at Chattanooga put the North in good humor, and General Halpine's rollicking narrative added zest to it.

Circulated as Lincoln's

Thereafter the story of Grant's liquor drinking and Lincoln's alleged comment on it drifted into common use. Soon it became divested of Halpine's (O'Reilly's) authorship and circulated as Lincoln's own.

Friends of General Grant, and they were legion, when he began winning victories, brushed aside troublesome rumors about his overindulgence with the alleged Lincoln comment. Lincoln disclaimed authorship of the quip, but did so with such manifest appreciation of the quality of the humor it carried that even his disclaimer increased the popularity of the jest.

The War Department telegraphers were among the first to ask the President about the origin of the story. These men were his "boys," young fellows seeing him every day at the War Department telegraph office, where Lincoln called regularly to get the latest news.

N.Y. Herald Tribune

2-12-28

(over)

Refuted by Chandler

The late Albert B. Chandler, president of the Postal Telegraph Company, one of the War Department telegraph operators, in 1895 went on record in refuting the myth in question. He writes:

"Major Eckert asked Mr. Lincoln if the story of his interview with the complainants against General Grant was true, viz., that he had inquired solicitously where the general got his liquor, and, on being told that the information could not be given, the President replied that he would very much like to find out, so that he might get enough to send a barrel to each one of his generals. Mr. Lincoln said that he had heard the story before, and that it would have been very good if he had said it, but that he didn't. He supposed it was 'charged to him' to give it currency.

Attributed to King George

"He then said the original of the story was in King George's time. Bitter complaints were made to the King against his General Wolfe, in which it was charged that he was mad. The King replied angrily, 'I wish he would bite some of my other generals, then.' He then mentioned a bright saying which he had recently heard during the draft riots in New York, in which the Irish figured most conspicuously—'It is said that General Kilpatrick is going to New York to quell the riot; but his name has nothing to do with it.'

The late David Homer Bates in his book, "Lincoln Stories," gives testimony similar to Colonel Chandler's, and the late Chaplain James B. Merwin, commissioned by Lincoln to talk temperance to the soldiers, said in a formal statement that Lincoln told him that the joke was a hundred years old when he first heard it attributed to him (Lincoln).

Brevet Brigadier General Halpine was born in County Meath, Ireland, in 1829, the son of an Episcopal rector of the Established Church. He was graduated from Trinity and spent several years in London before coming to this country.

Wrote for Papers

He did editorial work on "The Boston Post," the New York Tribune and "The New York Times" under Raymond. He was a poet, and his verse is in American anthologies. He enlisted in the 69th New York Regiment under Colonel Corcoran, and later joined the staff of General Hunter. His last duty in the service was under General John A. Dix in New York. He organized the Democratic Union, and opposed Boss Tweed in his own paper, "The Citizen." He ran on an independent Democratic ticket for County Register and was elected, overcoming an adverse majority of 50,000. He died here at the age of thirty-nine from an overdose of morphine to induce sleep.

The late Robert B. Roosevelt, uncle of the President, who edited a volume of his poems, said his death was "a national calamity."

His forte was writing stories of imaginary banquets, with speeches, songs, repartee, etc., all of his own invention. He was a warm admirer of President Lincoln, whom he knew personally, but this fact did not prevent him from taking liberties with him in his fictitious narratives.

**FRIEND RELATES LINCOLN'S
JOKE ABOUT COLD WEATHER**

FRANKLIN, Ind., —(U.P.)— The winters are getting warmer, according to Raymond H. Seller, editor of the Franklin Star, who relates the following story of Abraham Lincoln, as told by Col. Herbert Wells Fay, custodian of the Lincoln tomb at Springfield, Ill., a personal acquaintance of the martyred President.

"Lincoln was stopping at a country hotel one sub-zero night while on his circuit. The room assigned him was unheated and the bed had few covers. About midnight he could stand it no longer and went downstairs to the stove. The other roomers had preceded him. The group sat in silence until a railroad train-walker stopped at a hotel to warm. He was covered with snow and his long beard bristled with icicles.

"What room did they assign you?" Lincoln asked."

**Old Lincoln Joke
About Cold Weather
in Illinois Recalled**

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"Lincoln was stopping at a country hotel one sub-zero night while on his circuit. The room assigned him was unheated and the bed had few covers. About midnight he could stand it no longer and went downstairs to the stove. The other roomers had preceded him. The group sat in silence until a railroad train-walker stopped at the hotel to warm. He was covered with snow and his long beard bristled with icicles.

"What room did they assign you?" Lincoln asked.

Here is a rather curious illustration of Lincoln's humor, and likewise his exalted and unusual honesty. In a letter to the proprietors of a wholesale store in Louisville, for whom suit had been brought, after notifying his client of the sale of certain real estate in satisfaction of their judgment, he adds: "As to the real estate we cannot attend to it. We are not real estate agents, we are lawyers. We recommend that you give the charge of it to Mr. Isaac S. Britton, a truthworthy man, and one whom the Lord made on purpose for such business." 10/8/32

Dr Louis A Warren
Fort Wayne Ind.

Dear Sir:-

I am Mr C. Forman

Life Ins. Co's
Vicus Whl
North Whl

on local L. N. L. I. N. S. Staff, we learn
of your connection & position ^{in all} ~~by not man~~
matters pertaining to our Lincoln.

The first inquiry is in regard to
Lincoln's relation to U. S. Grant, Esq.,
as to question of temperance of U. S. Grant.
We have all the story ~~heads~~ along
Abraham Lincoln ~~drinking~~ to secure a
certain brand of liquor for Genl Grant,
"provided it would be of real benefit to him
as a general."

The story that raises the real issue
is that one that relates that at the
last some liquor was offered to the General
to strengthen him. His reply was said to
be not now. "I have never touched liquor
in my life". Should this latter prove the
true story true to know it. As a aid to
this latter now it is stated that the
liquor ^{said to be} contained seen in Genl Grant's
trunk were those of ^{said to be} air and not his own

2). The facts as to Grant's temperance (and
so as related to Lincoln as above) would
be well worth while. If U S Grant
was a temperate man, many, many
schools named after him would
doubtless be glad to know it and
some might even like to have him up
and forward a document from the
truth of his temperance stand.

Ins Co. stand
on the
Damned Plan

Mr Forman assures

me that personally
he is for the Damned Plan and
in its favorableness he thinks he
sees ahead a nation more or
less annuity minded, keyed
up to a higher minimum and
open to approach on this subject to all
progressive Annuity Policy Companies.

If Consistent, kindly give the Ins Co.
stand on this, as of real interest to
the seven million (more or less) who
have so far signed the Townsends Petitions.
The Long Beach Uprising this plan is at age 60,
200⁰⁰ mo for both husband & wife if they accept
same and agree to cease from gainful labor.

3). a Chr. Service lady,
a teacher of many years
experience, today
said. "I believe the

Ins Cos
Stand on
Intemperance

Ins Cos are for
intemperance as against prohibition.
Reason - More business less that way,
and greater profit."

This was a surprise to me. If she
thinks so, thousands of others must
share the same opinion. And to
me that stand (if it is a stand)
would hurt the good name of life Ins.
and in some cases bring down cer-
tain peoples high opinion of cer-
tain Ins Cos as such to a much lower
level.

An answer to these very recent
queries will be highly appreciated.
and if you can to get into facting
data, at will be fine persons, and we
will surely give you & yours Lincoln Natl.
Life Ins Co. ^{will see that} all due and proper credit
will gladly be given. Truly RC

1000 Ocean Blvd.
Long Beach, California

Elton

November 13, 1934

Mr. H. P. Felton
1000 E. Ocean Blvd.
Long Beach, Calif.

Dear Mr. Felton:

Your letter with reference to the controversy in regard to Lincoln's statement about the kind of whiskey Grant used is before me.

Those who have investigated this matter, while not denying that Grant used whiskey, have not been able to discover that Lincoln on any occasion made reference to the brand of whiskey which Grant used, although it is commonly alleged that he said if he could find out he would be glad to buy some for all of his generals if it would make them fight the way Grant fought.

While this sounds very much like Lincoln as far as the phraseology of the statement is concerned, it has been largely discredited by those who have gone into the matter thoroughly.

I regret very much to state that I have no way of learning the attitude of insurance companies in general on the temperance question, in fact I doubt very much if any insurance company has any policy on purely a personal matter, and I imagine that the opinions would differ as much as individuals differ.

I regret very much that I cannot be of more help to you, but I may say that I have never seen any statement issued officially that would even imply that the insurance companies as a body sanction the intemperate use of intoxicants, although here I am not qualified to speak as my knowledge of the insurance field is very limited.

I am enclosing one or two bulletins which I think possibly you might like to have.

Very truly yours,

LAW: MB
L. A. Warren
Encs.

Director
Lincoln National Life Foundation

Lincoln Typified

Humor of His Time

Chr. Science Monitor

2-17-36

SPRINGFIELD, Ill., Feb. 13 (AP)—

Dr. Benjamin P. Thomas, secretary of the Abraham Lincoln Association, described the man whose 127th birthday anniversary was celebrated by the nation yesterday as typifying the American humor of his time.

"Humor to Lincoln served many useful purposes," Dr. Thomas said. "At times Lincoln found in humor a necessary safety valve to his overburdened mind. Often the use of a story enabled him to soften a refusal or a rebuke. But the most frequent use to which Lincoln put his wit was as an aid to clarity in meaning. His conversations were as heavily freighted with stories as were his letters with similes and metaphors."

Dr. Thomas said that Lincoln's humor was difficult to analyze because it was often impossible to prove that he told a particular story credited to him.

Dr. Thomas said 1854, six years before his election to the presidency, marked a turning point in Lincoln's humor. Humor and ridicule were his chief stump-speaking reliances before then, while later speeches were "intensely serious," with the wit an incidental matter.

"Lincoln's humor, in its unrestraint, its unconventionality, its use of back country vernacular, its willingness to see things as they are, its shrewd comments in homely, earthy phrase, its frequent contentment with externals, typified the American humor of his time," Thomas said.

Ill. State Register

ILLINOIS STA

2/18/57

LIGHTER VEIN

TO SMILE ALL DAY KEEPS THE FROWNS AWAY
Our Motto: Boost and the World Smiles With You;
Knock and You Frown Alone!

LINCOLN'S JOKES MADE MOTHER EARTH CHUCKLE; FLASHES FROM FLAGSHIP!

ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S sense of humor made possible his success! He smiled calmly and laughed little, but the buoyancy of his unconquerable soul was due to his ability to soothe the pangs of sorrow with the sweetest smiles of sympathy and the rarest charms of subtle humor!

All the world loves the laughter which Lincoln has caused to echo down the corridors of time!

WE ARE INDEBTED to John Frank Brown of the Treasury Department at Washington, for some new quips about Lincoln which he gathered during world-wide travels and which are relayed to us by Miss Edith Frank of Springfield, now with the Treasury Department at Washington! Abbreviated, they follow:

THE RIGGS BANK in Washington, D. C., has in its possession a check which reads:

"Pay to the Order of—COLORED MAN WITH WOODEN LEG—\$5.00! A. LINCOLN!"

WHILE COMMANDING, as captain, a company of volunteers in the Blackhawk War, Mr. Lincoln, with his company, came to a rail fence during a forced march!

Lincoln could not recall the proper command to have the company scale the fence, but with his never-failing resourcefulness, he shouted to his command:

"This company is dismissed! It will reassemble on the other side of the fence in one minute!"

A grave problem of military strategy was solved in a moment in true frontier fashion!

THE COURT HOUSE in Springfield is the setting for another story attributed to the late Col. L. H. Waters of Kansas City, Missouri! A drowsy bench listened to the "pert dispute and dull debate" of contending frontier lawyers! Meanwhile the rest of the bar, Mr. Lincoln among them, awaited the procession of causes!

One of the barristers had his long Illinois legs upon a table, displaying (unconsciously, of course) a rent in a vital if not vulnerable part of the seat of his blue jean trousers!

While Mr. Lincoln and other observers smiled, a wag solon passed around among his legal brethren a petition to procure a new pair of trousers for the long-legged barrister! Several subscribed at once, ten cents each. Jeans cost 75 cents a copy! When the petition came over to Mr. Lincoln, he wrote upon it:

"I am unwilling to contribute anything for the end in view!"

After an outburst of titters among the learned lawyers which interrupted the somber judicial decorum, "Abe" reconsidered and generously contributed two bits!

MORE OF LINCOLN'S FAMOUS HUMOR IS BROUGHT TO LIGHT

BEFORE Abraham Lincoln became known as a great statesman, he was famous as a story teller. His sense of humor was the most fascinating of his personal qualities, some historians say.

With a spontaneous wit which mixed wholesome fun and true philosophy, he used his funny stories to win legal cases, to illustrate a point while in discussion with neighbors, and to enliven his brilliant political speeches.

Whenever Lincoln wanted to drive home a point he usually began by saying, "Now, that reminds me of a story." Then the face, which his contemporaries said was the saddest in repose that they had ever seen, would brighten like the sun escaping from behind a cloud and he would tell an appropriate yarn.

Among the prized possessions of a Colorado pioneer rancher is a collection of these witty Lincoln stories. On the occasion of the Great Story Telling President's birthday, Simon Shafer of Hayden, Colo., brings forth these anecdotes of the past:

NOISE LIKE A TURNIP

"Every man has his own peculiar and particular way of getting at and doing things," said President Lincoln one day, "and he is often criticized because that way is not the one adopted by others. The great idea is to accomplish what you set out to do. When a man is successful in whatever he attempts, he has many imitators, and the methods used are not so closely scrutinized, altho no man who is of good intent will resort to mean underhanded scurvy tricks.

"That reminds me of a fellow out in Illinois, who had better luck in getting prairie chickens than any one in the neighborhood. He had a rusty old gun no other man dared to handle; he never seemed to exert himself, being listless and indifferent when out after game. But he always brought home all the chickens he could carry, while some of the others, with their finely trained dogs and latest improved fowling pieces came home alone.

"How is it, Jake?" inquired one sportsman, who, altho a good shot, and knew something about hunting, was often unfortunate, "that you never come home without a lot of birds?"

"Jake grinned, half closed his eyes, and replied: 'Oh, I don't know that there's anything queer about it, I jes' go ahead and git 'em.'

"Yes, I know you do; but how do you do it?"

"You'll tell."

"Honest, Jake, I won't say a word. Hope to drop dead this minute."

"Never say nothing if I tell you?"

"Cross my heart three times."

"This assured Jake, who put his mouth close to the ear of his eager questioner and said, in a whisper:

"All you do is jes' hide in a fence corner an' make a noise like a turnip. That'll bring the chickens every time."

shotgun go off, and in a few minutes the farmer entered the house.

"What luck have you?" asked she.

"I hid myself behlnd the woodpile," said the old man, "with the shotgun pointed towards the hen roost, and before long there appeared not one skunk, but seven, I took aim, blazed away, killed one, and he raised such a fearful smell that I concluded it was best to let the other six go."

The senators laughed and retired.

* * *

ONE THING 'ABE' DIDN'T LOVE

Lincoln admitted that he was not particularly energetic when it came to real hard work.

"My father," said he one day, "taught me how to work, but not to love it. I never did like to work and I don't deny it. I'd rather read, tell stories, crack jokes, talk, laugh—anything but work."

* * *

'ABE'S' HAIR NEEDED COMBING

"By the way," remarked President Lincoln one day to Colonel Cannon, a close personal friend, "I can tell you a good story about my hair. When I was nominated at Chicago an enterprising fellow thought that a great many people would like to see how 'Abe' Lincoln looked, and, as I had not long before sat for a photograph, the fellow, having seen it, rushed over and bought the negative.

"He at once got no end of wood cuts, and so active was their circulation they were soon selling in all parts of the country.

"Soon after they reached Springfield I heard a boy crying them for sale on the streets. 'Here's your likeness of "Abe" Lincoln!' he shouted. 'Buy one; price only 1 shilling! Will look a great deal better when he gets his hair combed!'"

* * *

LOVED SOLDIERS' HUMOR

Lincoln loved anything that savored of wit or humor among the soldiers. He used to relate two stories to show, he said, that neither death nor danger could quench the humor of the American soldier:

"A soldier of the Army of the Potomac was being carried to the rear of battle with both legs shot off, and seeing a pie-woman called out, 'Say, old lady, are them pies sewed or pegged?'

"And there was another one of the soldiers at the battle of Chancellorsville whose regiment, waiting to be called into the fight, was taking coffee. The hero of the story put to his lips a crockery mug which he had carried with care thru several campaigns. A stray bullet, just missing the drinker's head, dashed the mug into fragments and left only the handle on his finger. Turning his head in that direction, he scowled, 'Johnny, you can't do that again!'

LET SIX SKUNKS GO

The president had decided to select a new war minister, and the leading Republican senators thought the occasion was opportune to change the whole seven cabinet ministers. They, therefore, earnestly advised him to make a clean sweep, and select seven new men, and so restore the waning confidence of the country.

The president listened with patient courtesy, and when the senators had concluded, he said, with a characteristic gleam of humor in his eye:

"Gentlemen, your request for a change of the whole cabinet because I have made one change reminds me of a story I once heard in Illinois, of a farmer who was much troubled by skunks. His wife insisted on his trying to get rid of them.

"He loaded his shotgun one moonlight night and awaited developments. After some time the wife heard the

NO VICES, NO VIRTUES

Lincoln always took great pleasure in relating this yarn:

Riding at one time in a stage with an old Kentuckian who was returning from Missouri, Lincoln excited the old gentleman's surprise by refusing to accept either tobacco or French brandy.

When they separated that afternoon—the Kentuckian to take another stage bound for Louisville—he shook hands warmly with Lincoln and said, good humoredly:

"You see, stranger, you're a clever but strange companion. I may never see you again and I don't want to offend you, but I want to say this: My experience has taught me that a man who has no vices has d——d few virtues. Good-day."

* * *

HOW JAKE GOT AWAY

One of the last, if not the last story told by President Lincoln, was to one of his cabinet who came to see him, to ask if it would be proper to permit "Jake" Thompson to slip thru Maine in disguise.

The president, as usual, was disposed to be merciful, and to permit the arch-rebel to pass unmolested, but Secretary Stanton urged that he should be arrested as a traitor.

"By permitting him to escape the penalties of treason," persisted the war secretary, "you sanction it."

"Well," replied Mr. Lincoln, "let me tell you a story. There was an Irish soldier here last summer, who wanted something to drink stronger than water, and stopped at a drugshop, where he espied a soda-fountain. 'Mr. Doctor,' said he, 'give me, please, a glass of soda-wather, an' if yez can put in a few drops of whisky unbeknown to anyone, I'll be obligeed.' Now, continued Mr. Lincoln, 'if 'Jake' Thompson is permitted to go thru Maine unbeknown to anyone, what's the harm? So don't have him arrested."

Lives Of Lincoln And Pope Stood For Love, Bishop Dallas Says

5/2/37

Special Despatch to The Press Herald
Brunswick, Feb. 12—The lives of both Pope Pius XI and of Abraham Lincoln stood for love, the Right Rev. John Dallas, Episcopal Bishop of New Hampshire, declared this evening at the opening address at the Bowdoin Forum on Modern Religious Thought. He stressed the importance of love in

HUMOR OF LINCOLN

EARTHY AND RICH

Phila. Evening Bulletin
Gentle or Devastating,
It Was Always

Pungent and Apt

Lincoln as the Great Heart and the Aesop of the American Prairies will live in the hearts of posterity ever alongside his fame as the Great Emancipator.

Philadelphia joins with the Nation tomorrow in marking the 130th anniversary of his birth. In foreign lands he has become a symbol of the common man and wherever Americans gather his birthday is marked.

Even as a boy, Lincoln displayed his characteristic sense of humor. One day when a liberal portion of baked potatoes was all that graced the table, his father asked the usual blessing. "Dad," commented Abe, "I call them mighty poor blessings."

As a lawyer he traveled about the circuit and after one long trip on the coldest of days he found all the best places about the fireplace at the inn occupied by other lawyers.

"Pretty cold night," said one lawyer to Abe.

"Colder than hell," remarked Lincoln.

"You been there?" inquired the first.

"Oh, yes," replied Lincoln, "and the funny thing is that it's much like it is here—all the lawyers are nearest the fire."

The nickname "Honest Abe" dates from an incident when he defended a man who it became evident in the course of the trial was bringing an unfair suit. Lincoln left the courtroom and when the judge sent for him to finish the case he replied: "You go tell the judge I'm washing my hands."

Once he locked two litigants in his law office and went off for the afternoon and when he returned they had settled their case out of court.

Another time a farmer came to him to get a divorce as result of an argument with his wife as to what color their house should be painted. The wife wanted it brown and the farmer wanted it white. Lincoln told them to compromise. A month later the farmer returned and said he didn't want the divorce, as he had compromised on the painting.

"What color you going to paint it?" asked Lincoln.

"Well," said the farmer, "we are going to paint it brown."

To him is accredited the description of an opponent's argument as "thin as the homeopathic soup made by boiling the shadow of a pigeon that has starved to death."

When the fire brigade at Spring-

field approached him for a donation he told them: "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll go home to supper—Mrs. Lincoln is generally good-natured after supper—and I'll tell her I've been thinking of giving \$50 to the fire company. And she'll say: 'Abe, will you never get any sense. Twenty dollars is quite enough.' So tomorrow come around and get your \$20." Which they did.

Reminiscent friends have written how in his long shirttails he would wander down the halls of the White House to show his close friends something he had read after going to his room. Another writes how, in his circuit riding days, they found him and a judge having a pillow fight in a hotel room before they went to bed.

Several times before his assassination he seemed to have a premonition of approaching death. Francis Grierson writes that Lincoln only a short time before her death related how he saw in a dream a number of people weeping in the White House and when he asked who was dead they told him the President. At his last Cabinet meeting he told of a dream he had of being in a small boat on a rolling river.

His last joke was just before his death when, after futile efforts to persuade his wife to allow him to stay home from the theatre, he said: "All right, Mary, I'll go, but if I don't go down in history as the martyr President I miss my guess."

President Lincoln, as is well known, was wont to seek relaxation and relief from the cares and anxieties of the Civil War by reading the writings of "Nashy" and "Artemas Ward," and in Sumner's introductory chapter to the volume of "Nashy's" letters he speaks of Lincoln's great fondness for the letters, and in illustration of that fondness narrates the following interesting incident in his own personal relations with Lincoln.

"Of publications during the war, none had such charm for Abraham Lincoln. He read every letter as it appeared, and kept them all within reach for refreshment. This strong liking illustrates his character, and will always awaken an interest in the letters. An incident in my own relations with him shows how easily he turned from care to humor. I had occasion to see President Lincoln very late in the evening of March 17, 1865. The interview was in the familiar room known as his office, and also used for cabinet meetings.

"I did not take leave of him until some time after midnight, and then the business was not entirely finished. As I rose he said, 'Come to me when I open shop in the morning; I will have the order written and you shall see it.' 'When do you open shop?' said I. 'At 9 o'clock,' he replied. At the hour named I was in the same room that I had so recently left. Very soon the

entered, stepping quickly with promised order in his hands, which he at once read to me. It was to disapprove and annul the judgment and sentence of a court-martial in a case that had excited much feeling.

"While I was making an abstract of the order for communication by telegraph to the anxious parties, he broke into quotation from 'Nashy.' Finding me less at home than himself with his favorite humorist, he said pleasantly, 'I must initiate you,' and then repeated with enthusiasm the message he had sent to the author: 'For the genins to write these things I would gladly give up my office.' Rising from his seat, he opened a desk behind and taking from it a pamphlet collection of the letters already published proceeded to read from it with infinite zest, while his melancholy features grew bright.

"It was a delight to see him surrender so completely to the fascination. Finding that I listened, he read for more than twenty minutes, and was still proceeding when it occurred to me that there must be many at the door waiting to see him on graver matters. Taking advantage of a pause I rose and, thanking him for the lesson of the morning, went away. Some thirty persons, including senators and representatives, were in the ante-chamber as I passed out. * * * In this simple story Abraham Lincoln introduces 'Nashy.' C. W. LEWIS.

FATHER OF HIS COUNTRY'S WIT

Lincoln Showed His Nation How to Use a Sense of Humor

By Edwin Misurell

AMERICA'S immortal Civil War President, who was born just 126 years ago, was one of the nation's sharpest wits. In spite of the trying vicissitudes of the War, and the multitudinous problems that beset Abraham Lincoln, he always managed to find time to brighten with his pointed anecdotes and witticisms the lives of those around him.

Any study of Lincoliana reveals how humorous the lanky Chief Executive could be under varied circumstances and proves that he knew when to tell a story and how to time it so that it would be most effective.

Lincoln did this extremely well, in the early days of 1862, when he was bothered daily by Northerners who requested passes to get through the lines to attend to business in the South. In particular, he squelched one annoyance who wanted a pass to Richmond and had finally made his way into the presidential chambers.

"A pass to Richmond!" exclaimed Lincoln. "Why, my dear sir, if I should give you one, it would do you no good. You may think it very strange, but there's a lot of fellows between here and Richmond who either can't read or are prejudiced against every man who takes a pass from me. I have given McClellan, and more than two hundred thousand others, passes to Richmond, and not one of them has gotten there yet!"

Lincoln, although besieged by office seekers everywhere, on occasion found the situation a humorous one. Referring to this annoyance, he jocularly remarked: "I am like a man so busy in letting rooms in one end of his house, that he can't stop to put out the fire that is burning in the other."

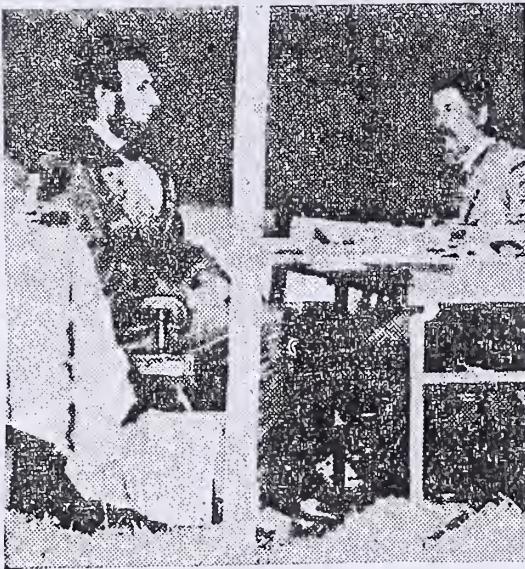
Congressman Jerry Smith was one of the law

makers who persistently hounded the President with applications for office. Lincoln was wont to twit him about this habit.

One day a delegation of clergymen called upon the President and one of them asked him if he ever sought counsel and guidance from the Lord. "Yes," he replied, "I pray every night before I retire. I think of the hundreds of thousands of soldiers camped in the South; the boys in blue as well as the boys in gray, and I pray that the one may be supported in their efforts to preserve the Union and the other shown the error of their unholy strife. I think



President Lincoln in the White House With His Wife and Sons, Robert T. and Thomas.



Lincoln With General McClellan in the Latter's Tent After the Battle of Antietam.

of my responsibility and pray for strength and wisdom. Then I look under the bed and find Jerry Smith is not there with an application for office. I thank the Lord for it, turn out the light, lock the door, jump in between the sheets, and to sleep instantly."

There were other occasions, however, when Lincoln found job-seekers extremely irritating and used his wit and droll sarcasm to put them in their places. He did this one day when he entered his office to find it filled with place-hunters from all parts of the nation, armed with recommendations and credentials.

One time, minding a mud scow in a bayou near the Yazoo, Lincoln related, he read a story of a certain king who called the Court Minister, said he wanted to go hunting, and asked the Minister if it would rain. The Minister told him the weather would be fair, it would not rain, and he could go hunting. The royal party on the way met a farmer riding a jackass. He told the king to turn back; it was going to rain. The king laughed, went on, and no sooner got started hunting than a heavy downpour of rain drenched him and his party to their royal skins. The king went back to the palace, threw out the Minister, and called for the farmer.

"Tell me how you knew it would rain."

"I did not know, Your Majesty, it's not me, it's my jackass. He puts his ears forward when it's going to be wet, and back when it's going to be dry weather."

The king sent the farmer away, had the jackass brought and put in the place of the Minister.

"It was here," said Lincoln, "the king made a great mistake."

"How so?" asked some of his audience.

"Why, ever since that time, every jackass wants an office!" To which the President added, "Gentlemen, leave your credentials, and when the war is over you'll hear from me."

Lincoln's sense of humor came to the fore again when an old friend from Springfield, after an evening in the White House, drawled: "How does it feel to be President of the United States?"

"You have heard about the man tarred and feathered and ridden out of town on a rail?" replied Lincoln. "A man in the crowd asked him how he liked it, and his reply was that if it wasn't for the honor of the thing, he would much rather walk."

On another occasion, a beaming and officious visitor slid into the office one day as Lincoln sat writing and chirruped, "Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be proud?" The President turned a noncommittal face. "My dear sir, I see no reason whatever," and went on writing.

Then there was the time that a foreign diplomat demurred at Lincoln's condemning a certain Greek history as tedious: "The author of that history, Mr. President, is one of the profoundest scholars of the age. Indeed, it may be doubted whether any man of our generation has plunged more deeply into the sacred fount of learning."

"Yes," remarked Lincoln, "or come up dryer."

Another of the Lincoln's witticisms was recalled by one of his officers, Captain John H. Cummings, after the war. "While I was whipping a new company into shape for the Army of the Potomac," he said, "the President and the Secretary of War came to review the outfit. Lincoln turned to Mr. Cameron and asked 'How does this regiment compare with our soldiers of the Black Hawk war, Mr. Cameron?'

"Very favorably, Sir," came the reply.

"Then Lincoln said: 'I sincerely hope the organization will suffer no more bloodshed than the troops of the Black Hawk campaign.'

"Secretary Cameron asked how much blood the men of the campaign had shed.

"Only what the mosquitoes drew from them," drawled President Lincoln with a twinkle in his eye."

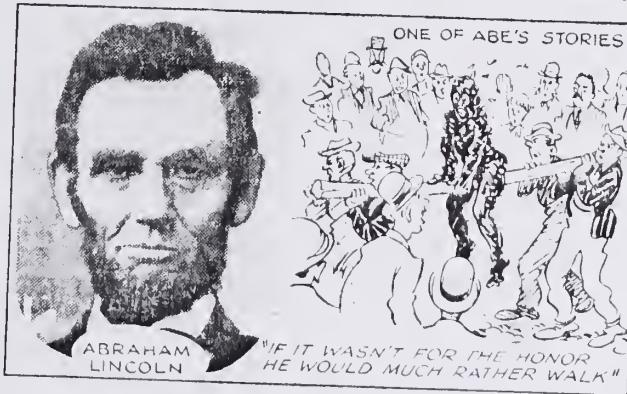
This Unusual World—Lincoln's Sense of Humor

ONE evening an old friend from Springfield, Ill., was calling upon President Abraham Lincoln in the White House in Washington.

"How does it feel to be president of the United States?" the friend drawled.

"You have heard about the man tarred and feathered and ridden out of town on a rail?" replied Lincoln. "A man in the crowd asked him how he liked it and he replied that if it wasn't for the honor of the thing he would rather walk."

As the Civil War president's birthday anniversary nears, America turns again, as always, to a study of some aspects of his life. Any investigation is bound to show how droll Lincoln could be, even under the most trying circumstances. Despite the war, the many problems of his high office, and personal sorrow, he never failed to brighten the lives of



those about him with witticisms and laughable anecdotes.

Besieged by requests for appointments by office seekers, he remarked one day:

"I am like a man so busy letting rooms in one end of the house he can't stop to put out the fire burning in the other."

On another occasion, Lincoln called a certain Greek history "tedious." Promptly a foreign diplomat told him that the author was a profound scholar who had plunged deeper than any other man into the "sacred well of learning."

"Yes," answered Lincoln. "And none came up any drier."

W. C. W. (A. J. Z.)

2-1-41

LINCOLN LORE

Bulletin of the Lincoln National Life Foundation
Published each week by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Number 789

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

May 22, 1944

HOOSIER HUMOR

The recent passing of George Ade, who was born the year after Lincoln died, closes a life span of these two Hoosier humorists of over a century and a quarter. Ade's demise, coming so shortly after the death of Irving Cobb, who lived just across the Ohio River from Indiana, makes it appropriate to gather a few notations under the title, *Hoosier Humor*.

The Lincoln National Life Foundation recently acquired a large plastic panel containing the full length figures of six humorists, who have been brought together in an informal study. The artist, Julian Lee Rayford, has called the portrait, "The Great American Humorists of the 19th Century." The six men included in this illustrious company of laughter-makers are Bret Harte, Mark Twain, James Whitcomb Riley, Abraham Lincoln, Josh Billings, and Artemus Ward, named in this order according to the positions, from left to right, which they occupy in the Rayford portrait.

Possibly we should have used the term "a half dozen humorists" rather than the specific number six, because it carries with it the idea of speaking in round numbers. The artist must have had this in mind, for under the inscription identifying the figures, is this notation: "P.S. Bill Nye was here but he's out to lunch right now."

The two Hoosiers, Riley and Lincoln, occupy the center of the study, where Lincoln towers above the others with his right arm resting on Riley, and his left hand on the shoulder of Artemus Ward. The entire group is presented in a story telling pose, each with some peculiar physical or property stamp to identify him.

The panel also contains a brief quotation from each humorist:—"Did you ever have the measles, if so; how many?" A. Ward.—"Be virtuous and you will be eccentric." M. Twain.—"The heathen Chinee is peculiar." B. Harte.—"The goblin 'll get you." Riley.—"If I did not laugh I should die." Lincoln.—"Good for 90 daze, yours without a struggle." J. Billings.

The expression taken from Lincoln's words about laughing, recalls that in his much quoted farewell letter, Irving Cobb mentioned his book, *Exit Laughing*. While Lincoln may not have contemplated that his exit from life would find him laughing, the fact is he was witnessing a comedy at the time of his assassination and in his last conscious moments he must have been smiling at least.

If we were to choose Lincoln's favorite half dozen humorists, we would select J. G. Baldwin, Charles Farrar Browne (Artemus Ward), David Ross Locke (Petroleum V. Nasby), C. G. Halpine, Joe Miller, and R. N. Newell (Orpheus C. Kerr). Lincoln's interest in many of the humorists rested in their ability to make him laugh, as he is reported to have said during the war that "laughter is my anecdote for tears."

While the Lincoln student may be interested in the humorists that made Lincoln laugh, most people are more familiar with Lincoln himself as the story teller. Often, in starting to tell a story, Lincoln would preface his remarks with "As my old father used to say." It was during the fourteen Hoosier years that Lincoln received his tutoring in humor, under the direction of his story telling father.

It is very difficult to organize with any degree of satisfaction, data which might fall under the general caption of Lincoln Humor. The first problem is to sort out the spurious from the genuine. Don Marquis in the *Saturday*

Evening Post, of fifteen years ago, stated, "I developed a bad habit of inventing Lincoln stories . . . When I couldn't find anything better to fill up my column, I used to invent a story and attribute it to Lincoln." We wonder how many columnists have been just as industrious as Don Marquis.

After having done sufficient culling of the fake stories by observing the time element, and internal evidence, the first division of importance is to separate the stories told about Lincoln from the stories told by Lincoln. The first division, although they may be of a humorous nature, belong, in reality, in a biographical classification, this also applies to stories which Lincoln may have told about himself or his autobiographical references. A large part of the humorous data about Lincoln should be gathered under biography.

The anecdote, yarn, tale, fable, or whatever term we may apply to incidents, real or imaginary, which Lincoln used for so many varied purposes, should be surveyed from an entirely different viewpoint.

The organization of the anecdotes themselves is an interesting and enlightening pursuit, and reveals the genius of Lincoln's humor, which can be gained in no other way. Here are some of the caption heads that might guide one in such a quest and which present some of the objectives for which Lincoln used his matchless power of story telling.

Objectives in Lincoln's Story Telling

ENTERTAINMENT.—The primitive cracker box type, which also extends over into the circuit riding days.

RIDICULE.—A devastating instrument used in the early political canvasses.

ILLUSTRATIONS.—A substitute for definition, and laborious explanation.

DIPLOMACY.—To relieve tension, remove barriers, dismiss applicants, evade decisions, forestall demands.

SOCIALIBILITY.—A medium for putting at ease those brought into his company.

STIMULATION.—To arouse the inert and to cheer the discouraged.

Laughter apparently served as a stimulant to Lincoln himself and in seasons when he seemed to be in the very depths of despondency he would himself become the story teller or seek some source of humor which would lift him out of remorse and nerve him for another trial. Often his humor was confused with what his critics referred to as a ribald and degenerating amusement and his reputation suffered from these exaggerations, especially during the latter part of the war.

This story about the efficacy of Lincoln's prayers is timely. Two women of the Quaker faith, during the rebellion, were discussing the probable outcome of the war. One said, "I think that Davis will succeed." When she was asked the reason for her opinion she stated, "Because Davis is a praying man." "And so is Lincoln, a praying man," her friend replied. The final retort, however, seemed to be convincing: "Yes, but the Lord will think Lincoln is joking."

Abe Lincoln, If Alive Today, Would Succeed as Gag Writer

BY LLOYD LEWIS

2/12/45

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Lincoln stood up and said, "I'm going to Congress."

Came Up Dry

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Gingerbread Boy

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The peacock, inhabitant of Ceylon, Burma, Malaya and Java, was imported into Greece by Alexander the Great.

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If He Were Living Today

Gags Would Make Lincoln Rich

By Lloyd Lewis

Lloyd Lewis, associate editor of the Chicago News who wrote this article on Lincoln, is author of "Myths After Lincoln" and other Civil War biographies.

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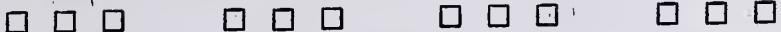
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Lincoln Top Gag-Man of His Day



His Dry, Simple Reports Left Opposition Hanging on Ropes

By LLOYD LEWIS.
Associate Editor, Chicago Daily News.

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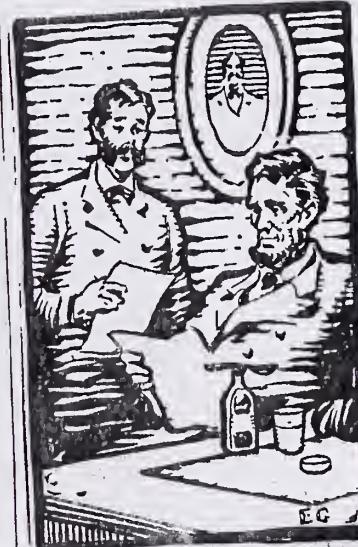
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THE CEDAR RAPIDS GAZETTE:

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2/11/45

2/2/43 Evansville Press Lincoln --- Pioneer Gag Man

HE WOULD HAVE BEEN BOON TO RADIO ERA

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Author of "Myths After Lincoln," and other Civil War biographies. "Sherman; Fighting Prophet" and associate editor, Chicago News.

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Lincoln Still Tops Among Quipsters

His Talent Would Have Brought Fortune As Radio Gag Man

By LLOYD LEWIS

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A LINE O' TYPE OR TWO

Here to the Line, let the
quips fall where they may.

Reg. U. S.
Pat. Off.

LINCOLN'S HUMOR

As an observance for the day, let us glance at a passage in "The Times of Melville and Whitman," Van Wyck Brooks' latest volume on American literary history and its backgrounds, for instruction on Abraham Lincoln's sense of humor. This new book contains nine pages of Lincoln lore, woven into its survey of the man who wrote the most famous Lincoln poem--Walt Whitman.

"He was also an unrivaled story-teller....He knew the boatmen's lingo and the river-lore of the Mississippi, the tales about Boone, Mike Fink, and Simon Kenton and the yarns about Sut Lovingood who threw the camp meeting into fits by setting the lizards loose in the preacher's trousers....He borrowed stories from Balzac too, passing them off as his own and setting them in Illinois or Indiana."

That remark about Balzac puzzles us, and we pass on this question to the fine-tooth combs of the legions of Lincoln experts: "Was Balzac's 'Droll Stories' accessible to Lincoln in an English translation?" We doubt it

"He liked the homespun western humor because it relieved the melancholy, the fear of madness and suicide, that weighed on his mind....He was one of these humorists himself who had written, in dialect, letters that were much like Nasby's, Jack Downing's, and Artemus Ward's. One was the 'Aunt Rebecca' letter in which in 1842 he had satirized the state officials of the Democratic party. All these humorists, who spread good will and affection for Lincoln, were active and efficient in forwarding the cause of the Union, and one of the northern statesmen said that the fall of the Confederacy was due as much to Nasby as to the northern arms."

Lincoln invited the creator of the

illiterate comic character, Petroleum V. Nasby, to visit him in the White House. This writer was a rough-and-ready Ohio newspaper editor named David Ross Locke. The Nasby letters started in the Jeffersonian, Findlay, O., in 1861, and continued in the Toledo Blade until 1887.

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LINCOLN, THE PROPHET

His frame was formed of common dust,

But genius burned within the clay.

God chose him from the world of men

To be the prophet of his day

He took him from his cabin home

And led him out to life's stern school.

He set him where the people thronged

That he might learn all hearts to rule.

He had no wealth, no pride of name,

He was the humblest of the earth;

And yet he walked a king indeed:

His royalty was in his worth.

He sought no prize of pomp or power,

He had no lust for lauded fame,

And yet today he rules a realm,

A world rejoices in his name.

Thomas Curtis Clark

-0-

They Acted Lincoln

The actor who has represented Abraham Lincoln most often on the stage and in the movies is Frank McGlynn, according to the "Lincoln Lore" bulletins. The titles of the shows in which he has appeared are "Abraham Lincoln," by John Drinkwater, "The Littlest Rebel," "The Plainsman," "The Prisoner of Shark Island," and "Wells Fargo."

Other actors who have given satisfactory performances as Lincoln are: Raymond Massey, Frederick Burton, Walter Huston, John L. Parsons, Joseph Hennberry, N. Schreoll, Sam D. Crane, George A. Billings, Charles E. Bull, Daniel Poole, Joel Day, Lawrence Couigan, Arthur Lincoln Coglier, Howard Hall, Paul McGrath, John Carradine, Chick Sale, John Miljan, Porter Hall, Charles Webster, Stephen Courtleigh, Ralph W. Ince, Ben Chapin, Dennis Connel, Hugh Studebaker, and Henry Fonda.

Chicago Tribune

2-12-48

Lincoln:

His jokes are still funny after 85 years

They called Lincoln "Champion
story-teller of the capitol."

Here are some samples of his wit

By DONALD WAYNE

To the people of Salem, Ill., it seemed that Abraham Lincoln had a fight on his hands. Lincoln, later to become president, had just served as second in a grudge fight between two Salem men.

Lincoln's man had lost, and now the winner's second—a pugnacious, stubby little man—had his fists up. The crowd watched in disbelief. The little man foolishly wanted to fight Lincoln!

Lincoln looked the little fellow over and his face broke into a smile.

"I'll fight you, John," he grinned, "if you'll chalk your size on me, and every blow outside counts foul."

The townspeople roared and the fight fizzled.

Few men were ever able to chalk their size against Lincoln's humor. But Lincoln the funnyman is a Lincoln largely forgotten.

"He could make a cat laugh," one man recalled.

Laughter Saved Him

Laughter was a thing he brought to the Presidential chair, and in the darkest days of the Civil War it was the vent that saved him from cracking up. Once after reading Artemus Ward to his Cabinet—a habit that shocked more than it amused—Lincoln confessed that with "the fearful strain that is upon me night and day if I did not laugh I should die."

Lincoln used laughter as a sword and buckler. His laugh was shrill

and high-pitched. He himself called it "coarse," but artist Francis B. Carpenter, who painted him at the White House, called it the "neigh of a wild horse on his native prairie . . . undisguised and hearty."

Whose Boots?

Lincoln threw open the White House to all visitors. He was so accustomed to hearing sob stories, advice on how to run the Government and pleas for favors that when a man told him he had just dropped in to look around, Lincoln invited him to lunch.

Lincoln was a gifted squelcher. When the aristocratic Secretary of the Treasury Salmon P. Chase called at the White House one day he found Lincoln polishing his big dusty shoes.

"Mr. President," said Chase, "gentlemen don't black their own boots."

Lincoln looked at him innocently. "Whose boots do they black?"

Lincoln's humor rarely ran to puns. But one day he was strolling with Secretary of State Seward along Pennsylvania Avenue. Seward pointed out a new sign with the name T. R. Strong. "Coffee," said Lincoln, "are stronger."

A lifelong friend of Lincoln's was Ward H. Lamon, who was also a backwoods lawyer. Travelling the Illinois circuit Lamon once got into a friendly wrestling match and argued his cases with a large rip in his pants. The other lawyers got up a mock subscription. The sheet was

passed to Lincoln, who scribbled, "I can contribute nothing to the end in view."

During his term in Congress (where he was the acknowledged "champion story teller of the Capitol") a House member once harped on the "unconstitutionality" of a bill Lincoln liked. This man, who had bushy eyebrows and wore glasses, preened himself as a shrewd authority on what was constitutional and what was not. Lincoln arose and said the debate reminded him of a man he used to know in Indiana who had bushy eyebrows and wore glasses. One morning this old fellow spotted a squirrel high on a tree near his cabin. He got out his rifle and fired away. He fired shot after shot but couldn't hit the squirrel. He asked his son, "Don't you see that squirrel humped up about halfway up the tree?" "No, I don't," said the boy, who then stared hard into his father's face. "I see your squirrel, Pa!" he yelled. "You're shooting at a louse on your eyebrow."

Lincoln's stories were pointed anecdotes, often humorous, always illuminating. He told them to cheer a friend, to clinch an argument, to expose a fallacy, or as an antidote for his own melancholy. The gravest affair of state or diplomacy had its denominator in some character or incident he remembered in Kentucky, Indiana or Illinois. The effect



CONTEMPORARIES copied this old Lincoln cartoon. "This reminds me of a little joke."

of his great democratic solvent.

Humor flowed from Lincoln like light. It was his great democratic solvent.

A popular joke of the day told about two Quaker ladies carrying on a spirited conversation in a railway coach. Said one: "I think Jefferson Davis will succeed."

"Why does thee think so?"

"Because Jefferson is a praying man."

"So is Abraham a praying man."

"Yes," replied the first, "but the Lord will think Abraham is joking!"

usually clarified things at once. Newspapers zealously printed "the latest" Lincoln quip. Stories circulated gratuitously in his name. Joke books flooded the paper-back market, stamping Lincoln with gags and yarns he never uttered. But Lincoln denied that he ever invented any. "I am only a retail dealer," he said.

He joked about his experiences in the Black Hawk War. As captain of his tiny raw militia Lincoln was drilling his men and marched them to a gate. He couldn't think of the command for getting them through. "This company," called Lincoln, "is dismissed for two minutes, when it will fall in again on the other side of the gate."

How to Save Jeff Davis

Toward the end of the war there was a lot of discussion about what to do with Jefferson Davis. Many rabid northerners wanted to hang him. Lincoln had a solution which reminded him of a man in Illinois who drank too much and had taken the pledge. He stuck to lemonade, but told his friends that if they poured in a little brandy "unbeknownst" to him, he didn't see how he could object. If Jeff Davis could get out of the country "unbeknownst" to him, Lincoln implied, the problem would solve itself.

Lincoln one day picked up a dispatch reporting the capture of a brigadier general and twenty mules. "Too bad about the mules," he said. "I can make more brigadiers, but those mules cost \$125 apiece."

When Lincoln was President-elect a wiseacre asked him how long his legs were. "Exactly the right length," said Lincoln, "to reach from my body to the ground."

Of a speaker who was a bag of wind Lincoln murmured, "Cut his galluses and let him go up."

General McClellan, whose activities proved to be more political than military, reminded Lincoln of a backwoods neighbor whose "horse kicked up and stuck its foot through the stirrup." The man said to the horse, "If you are going to get on, I will get off."

Humor flowed from Lincoln like light. It was his great democratic solvent.

Lincoln's Humor

His Life Preserver

(Here's the story behind the famous Lincoln wit by the noted biographer and author of the new illustrated Biography of Abraham Lincoln.)

BY STEFAN LORANT

Written for the Associated Press

For Abraham Lincoln, laughter was the "joyous, beautiful evergreen of life." He needed it as he needed food and water and during the dark days of the war, laughter was his life preserver.

Lincoln liked to listen to and tell jokes. But he seldom told a joke for the joke's sake. They were like parables; they were lessons of wisdom. His stories made a point clear, clinched an argument—and they usually began with "that reminds me . . ."

When Horace Greeley ripped into Lincoln in a violent editorial, the President was asked how he felt about it.

Lincoln was reminded of the big fellow whose wife beat him over the head without resistance. As others tried to interfere, the man told them: "Let her alone. It don't hurt me and it does her a power of good."

AT ANOTHER occasion, a group of senators came to urge Lincoln to reorganize his cabinet.

He was reminded of the story of an old farmer back in Illinois who was pestered by skunks. As he went out into the night with his gun, ready to put an end to the unpleasant visitor, not one skunk but seven appeared.

The farmer took aim and killed one, but that one raised such a fearful smell he decided the best thing was to let the other six go.

After listening to the story, none of the lawmakers pressed for cabinet reorganization.

MUCH OF the press attacked Lincoln mercilessly. Such savagery outbursts recalled to Lincoln the backwoods traveler lost in a thunderstorm.

As lightning streaked, thunder roared and the blackness became frightening, the traveler fell to his knees and prayed: "Oh Lord, if it is all the same to you, give us a little more light and a little less noise."

CRITICISM voiced by political adversaries from his own party brought to Lincoln's mind an old acquaintance who gave his son a microscope. From then on the boy looked at

ner his father took a piece of cheese.

"Don't eat that, father!" cried the boy. "It's full of wrigglers."

"My son," said the old man, biting into the cheese with great relish, "let them wriggle; I can stand it if they can."

Lincoln joked about himself as easily as he did about others. When asked how it felt to be President, he answered with the story of the tanned and feathered man whose neighbors were riding him out of town on a rail.

When they inquired how he liked it, the man replied: "If it wasn't for the honor of the thing, I would much rather walk."

"THEY say I tell many stories," Lincoln once remarked. "I reckon I do, but I have learned from long experience that plain people take them as they run, are more easily influenced through the medium of the broad and humorous illustration than in any other way; and what the hypercritical few may think, I don't care."

The Lincoln We Often Forget: Man of Humor

Abe Was Cracker-Barrel Story Teller, Spoke for People

BY JACK LIND

An old story attributed to Lincoln is gaining currency during the current political season.

It has to do with Lincoln's reply to the man who asked him during the 1864 campaign who he thought would be the next President.

It reminded Lincoln of the old Irishman who doffed his hat respectfully as a funeral procession went by, then asked his neighbor whose funeral it was.

"Not that I can tell for sartin," replied the neighbor, "but to the best of my belief, it's the funeral of the gentleman or lady in the coffin."

"That goes for the presidency, too," said Lincoln. "I can't say for sartin who will be the successful candidate."

"But my best guess is that it will be the people's choice."

The choice, as everybody knows, was Lincoln, who was re-elected.

THE STORY is told by Harry J. Owens, 61, of Flossmoor, who likes to refer to himself as a "Sunday writer." He is writing a book on Lincoln.

Owens, a homespun retired farmer from Carlinville, is advertising manager for R. R. Donnelley & Sons printing firm.

He already has published two books—"The Scandalous Adventures of Reynard the Fox," a retelling of an old German tale, and "Dr. Faust," a puppet play.

HE STARTED on the Lincoln book because he didn't think previous books on Lincoln's humor did him justice.

"Nearly all the early writers of Lincoln books missed the flavor of his stories and anecdotes," says Owens, a ruddy-faced, pipe-smoking man.

"Since they were writing books about a great president, they felt they had to be rather formal."

OWENS emphasizes some of the gusto of Lincoln's Midwest twang and some of the oral tone of his quiet, dry humor.

He scoffs at some writers who have Lincoln tell stories in New England phraseology.

Owens thinks he has the

representative of the people because he spoke the language of the people in which comedy is an unfailing part.

"It was the language of the streets, the fields and the factories."

WHEN, as a young man, Big Abe traveled the court circuit downstate, the local citizenry would crowd around him to hear "Lincoln's latest ones," Owens says.

Before he left for Washington, well-meaning friends suggested that his jokes might not go over well among the striped pants set in government.

"This may have bothered Lincoln for a while," says Owens, "but if it did, it wasn't for long."

"He was telling stories from the rear platform of the special train that took him to Washington for the inauguration."

AMONG Owens' Lincoln stories is this one.

Once, on his way to deliver an important speech, Lincoln was late leaving the White House. Officials were jumpy when Lincoln finally arrived.

It reminded Lincoln of the

story of the crowd pushing along to view the hanging of a convicted man. The prisoner got exasperated, stood up in the wagon and told the crowd:

"Hey, you gandernecks! What are you all in such a hurry about?"

"Take it easy. There ain't nobody a-goin' to have no fun till I get there."

The speech Lincoln was late getting to was the Gettysburg Address.

qualifications for retelling Lincoln's stories. He is a graduate of the "Hot Stove Leagues" of which Lincoln was himself a product.

Many of the stories Lincoln told were related to Owens by old-timers in southern Illinois.

"I SAT around Carlinville for years listening to these old crackerbox storytellers spin stories hour after hour," Owens recalls.

"I grew up talking the peculiar twang of Lincoln's Illinois."

Lincoln, says Owens, "came close to perfection as the chief

Lincoln's Wit Bubbled Up Despite Sorrow

By JERRY KLEIN

NEW YORK, Feb. 11 (NANA)—

Of all the photographs of Abraham Lincoln, none shows him smiling. And certainly there were personal and political problems aplenty in Lincoln's life to make him sad. Nevertheless, he was a man with a ready wit, a sharp sense of the ridiculous and a genuine humor.

One of the books Lincoln was able to lay his hands on as a young man was the famous Joe Miller's jest-book. The jokes it contained were 100 years old when the rail-splitter read them. Still, Abe repeated many of them "although he had a thousand fresher ones of his own."

In fact, when young Lincoln was elected to the Illinois state Legislature, he was "recognized as the champion story teller of the capital." When he relaxed, "his favorite seat was at the left of the open fireplace, tilted back in his chair, with his long legs reaching over to the chimney jamb." At such happy moments, his friends said "he never told a story twice, but seemed to have an endless repertoire always ready."

Pigeon Story

"If three pigeons are sitting on a fence and you shoot and kill one of them, how many will be left?" Lincoln would ask. And one of his acquaintances would answer: "Two!"

"No," the future President would answer, "there wouldn't be any

left because the other two would fly away."

Another time the whole state capital turned out in lavish mourning for a politician who had died. Lincoln was as saddened by death as any man, but he knew the departed politician as a vain, self-seeking person. "If General Blank had only known how big a funeral he would have," said Lincoln, "he would have died years ago!"

In Springfield, Lincoln spent much of his time fighting cases in court. Many of the cases were dull, dry, drawn-out affairs, but the backwoods lawyer had the ability to put both judge and jury in jovial humor—while at the same time registering important legal points in the trial.

Opposition lawyers sputtered with rage and occasionally, of course, the judge lost his patience with this beanpole who was continually upsetting the dignity of the court. After one prank, the judge said, "I am not going to stand for this any longer, Mr. Lincoln. You're always disturbing this court with your tomfoolery and I fine you \$5."

Afterward, the judge asked to hear the joke that had tickled the court. Lincoln repeated it and the judge was so amused he canceled the fine.

A favorite tale of the future

President concerned a man who was convicted of murder and sentenced to be hanged. But on his way to the gallows, the prisoner begged that the rope might be tied under his arms instead of around his neck, for I am so ticklish in the throat that if I was tied there, I'd certainly kill myself with laughing!"

Lincoln used a jest when other people might show anger. Given something distasteful in a restaurant one day, he called the waiter and said: "If this is coffee, please bring me some tea. But if this is tea, bring me some coffee."

Perhaps politics presented Lincoln with the chance to use his sense of humor most effectively. In one of his earliest campaign talks, Abe said his political views were "short and sweet—like the old lady's dance."

Many years later, when Lincoln was battling Stephen Douglas for the Presidency, he said Douglas's arguments were as thin as "soup made by boiling the shadow of a pigeon that has starved to death!"

Modern veterinary practises are believed to date from the establishment of a veterinary school first opened in Lyons, France, in 1761.

OUTDOORS

Some of Lincoln's Favorite Tales

By EUGENE BURNS
Ranger Naturalist

What better way to remember Abraham Lincoln's birthday than to let the outdoorsman Lincoln speak through some of his favorite stories:

An old Springfield neighbor of Lincoln, after an evening at the White House, asked: "How does it feel to be President of the United States?"

"You have heard," said Lincoln, "about the man tarred and feathered and ridden out of town on a rail? A man in the crowd asked him how he liked it, and his reply was that if it wasn't for the honor of the thing, he would rather walk." (From *War Years* by Carl Sandburg.)

CIVIL WAR

Abraham Lincoln was vastly disturbed during the Civil War because he was so often denounced and criticized by people who pretended to be wise on a minimum diet of facts and information. They offered wisdom they did not possess. So whimsically, he told the story of a backwoods traveler lost in a terrific thunderstorm. The rider floundered through the mud until his horse gave out. Then he stood alone in the middle of the road while lightning streaked and thunder roared around him. One crash seemed to shake the earth underneath, and it brought the traveler to his knees. He was not a praying man but he made a petition, short and to the point: "O Lord, if it is all the same to you, give us a little more light and a little less noise." (Harold Blake Walker.)

Clients knew that with old Abe as their lawyer, they would win their case—if it was fair; if not, that it was a waste of time to take it to him. After listening one day to a would-be client's statement, with his eyes on the ceiling, Lincoln swung around in his chair and exclaimed:



2-12-58

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Boston Globe
February 12, 1958

'He Used Humor to Reach People

While Civil War Raged, Lincoln Cracked Jokes

By RICHARD HANSER

"Now he belongs to the ages," lamented Secretary of War Stanton at that death bed on the morning of April 15, 1865, and the note was struck for most of the writing about Lincoln since—Lincoln, the towering figure of tragedy, remote, brooding, more than mortal.

But if we have come to see him almost exclusively as a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, his contemporaries were more inclined to view him as a fellow of infinite jest.

★ ★ ★
People who had known him for 30 years before he became historic recalled him chiefly as "a tall man and a funny one." Usher F. Linden, a colleague of his courtroom days, expressed a widely prevalent sentiment when he exclaimed, "O, Lord, wasn't he funny!"

And when he was in the White House, the *Metropolitan Record* of New York observed that his "ever-flowing humor and inexhaustible fund of jokes" spared the nation the expense of maintaining a court jester. Lincoln performed that role for himself, along with his associate duties of governing the nation, fighting the war, and saving the Union. A good many earnest citizens shared the testiness of Richard Henry Dana when he asked: "Can this man Lincoln ever be serious?"

It often seemed not.

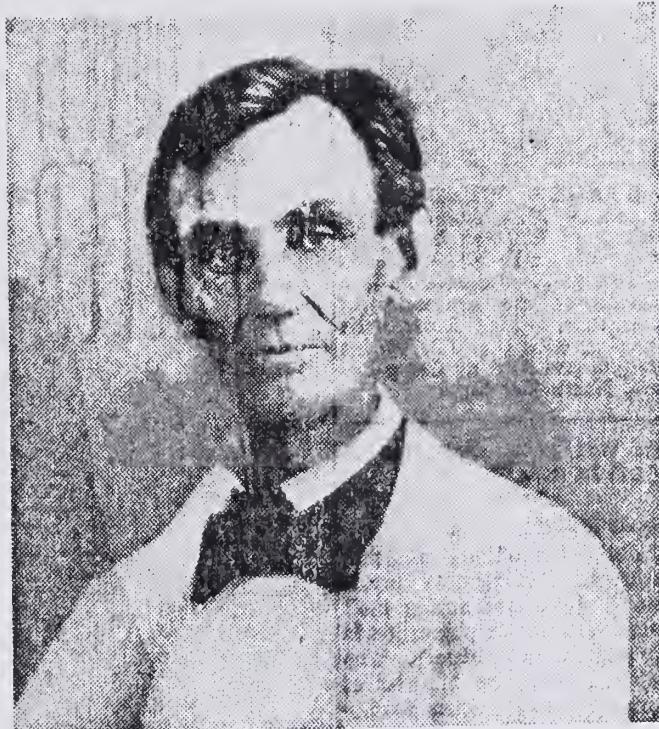
When the Union forces, after months of floundering seemed hopelessly bogged down before Vicksburg, Sen. Ben Wade of Ohio went blustering into the White House to demand that Grant be dismissed at once.

"Senator," said Lincoln, "that reminds me of a story—"

"Yes, yes," Wade exploded. "That is the way it is with you, Sir, all story, story! You are the father of every military blunder that has been made during the war. You are on the road to hell, Sir, with this government, by your obstinacy, and you are not a mile off this minute!"

"Senator," said the President, "that is just about the distance from here to the Capitol, is it not?"

The jab of the jest was sharpened soon afterwards when Vicksburg fell, and Lincoln had no more worry on that score. "When



HUMOR WITHOUT A SMILE—This exceptionally clear picture of Lincoln was taken in 1858, and is believed to be one of the last taken before he grew a beard.

Grant once gets possession of a place," he used to say, "he holds on to it as if he had inherited it."

★ ★ ★
What impressed Ralph Waldo Emerson most when he visited the White House was "a sort of boyish cheerfulness" about the President.

"When he has made his remark," Emerson noted in his Journals, "he looks at you with great satisfaction, and shows all his white teeth, and laughs."

If this sort of off-the-cuff levity were all that was involved in Lincoln's humor, it would be hardly more significant or interesting than the occasional limerick which the austere Wilson liked to rattle off, or Franklin Roosevelt's jolly good-fellow joshing with the Washington press corps.

But Lincoln's humor was deep-grained and habitual, a basic component in the complex chemistry of his personality. He used his "stories" as a way of thinking and reacting. He used them as a means of making contact with other people, of winning them over or putting them off, or persuading or diverting them.

He knew the people and how to reach them better than any man of his time," wrote Chauncey M. Depew.

"I heard him tell a great many stories, many of which would not do exactly in the drawing room. But for the person whom he wished to reach, and the object that he wished to accomplish with the interesting story did more than any argument could have done."

★ ★ ★
McClellan's interminable preparations for action without even making a decisive move prompted Lincoln to say, "It is called the Army of the Potomac but it is only McClellan's bodyguard. . . . If he is not using the Army, I should like to borrow it for a while."

When a man asked him for a pass to Richmond, he said he would be glad to oblige, "but I have given McClellan more than 200,000 passes to Richmond, and not a man has got there yet."

Once he received a dispatch from the front which said little more

than that one of Burnside's units had been heard firing briskly. He seemed more pleased with this news than its importance warranted.

"It reminds me of a neighbor of mine in Menard County, named Sally Ward," he explained. "She had a large family of children that she took very little care of. Whenever she heard one of them yelling in some out-of-the-way place she would say, 'Thank the Lord! There's one of my young ones not dead yet!'"

★ ★ ★

His humorous bent and gift for laughter, in fact, contributed crucially to his success in law and politics. His rise to national eminence might, indeed, have been impossible without them.

He used his stories, too, to drive home some blunt truths of the kind that politicians usually disguise with the glossy oratory of the rostrum.

Lincoln opposed the Mexican War and was not swayed by the platitudes used to justify it. Those who contended it was not a war of aggression reminded him of "the Illinois farmer who insisted: 'I ain't greedy 'bout land. I only want what jines mine.'"

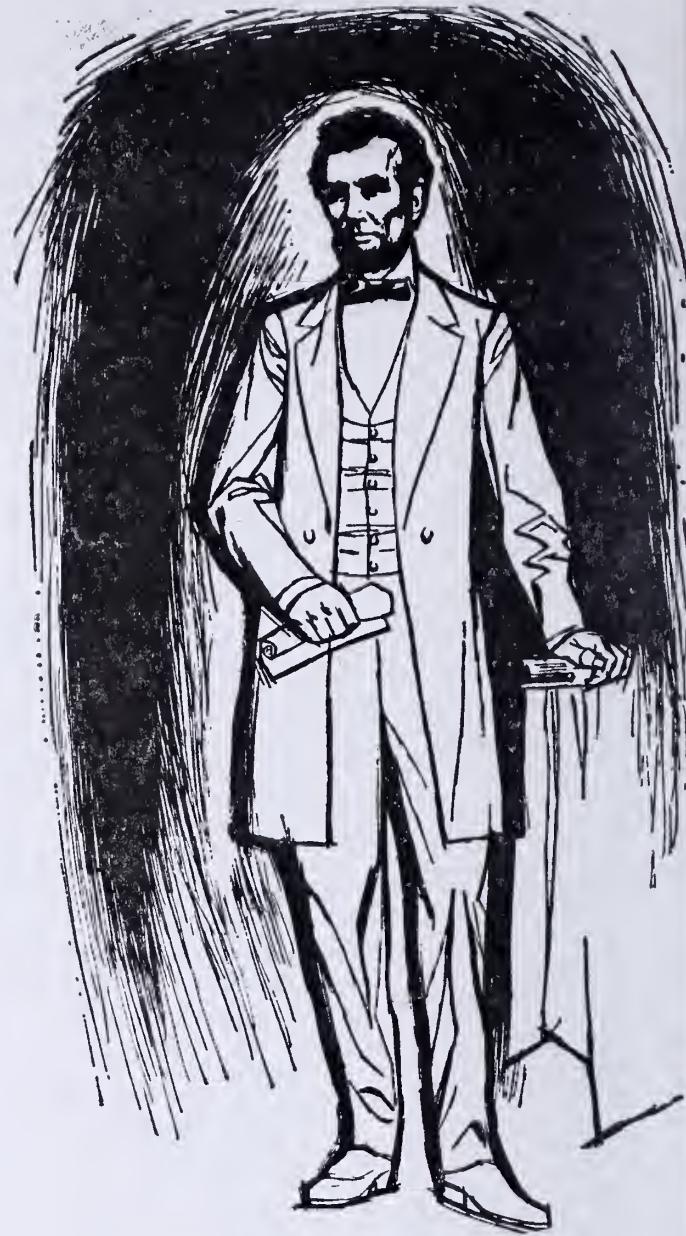
When once he was asked how it felt to be President of the United States, he answered:

"You have heard about the man tarred and feathered and ridden out of town on a rail? A man in the crowd asked him how he liked it, and his reply was that if it wasn't for the honor of the thing, he would much rather walk."

He did not feel like going to Ford's Theater that night. He had already seen "Our American Cousin," in which Laura Keene was to give her final performance. Still, his appearance had been announced in the papers and he did not wish to disappoint the people he knew would turn out to see him.

Besides, the play was a comedy, after all, and he always looked forward to any occasion that promised laughter.

(Reprinted by special permission from the current issue of the Saturday Review.)



Abe's Humor Helped

The great friend of labor, America's man for the ages, Abraham Lincoln, the Susquicentennial of whose birthday we celebrate on February 12, 1959, had an ace card that aided him in weathering the storms of one of the most heart-breaking wars in history. Abe's ace was an ability to see himself and things around him in long perspective.

THIS IS THE NEW fascination today for the man who so completely surmounted tragedy. We learn now how a fund of warm humor enabled Abraham Lincoln to bear the burdens of Civil War presidency. Many of the stories told by and about him, have been repeated so often they are legendary, but there are others, less well-known, which give an accurate portrait of the 16th President and his time. These are a few printed in connection with the 1959 sesquicentennial of Lincoln's birth.

DURING the famous Abraham Lincoln-Douglas debates, Stephen Douglas called Lincoln a "two-faced man." Lincoln replied: "I leave it to my audience. If I had another face, do you think I would wear this one?"

DISCUSSING the elaborate funeral of an Illinois politician Abraham Lincoln said, "Why, if

he'd known how big a funeral he was going to have, he would have died years ago."

ONE OLD CHAP, disappointed at not having had a chance to shake President Lincoln's hand at a reception, shouted to him: "Mr. President, up in New York state we believe God and Abraham Lincoln are going to save this country."

LINCOLN turned to him with a smile. "My friend," he said, "You are half right."

Davenport, Iowa
February 12, 1959

Homely Humor, Witty Anecdotes Highlight Lincoln Personality



By REX BALLARD

Times City Editor

Abraham Lincoln was well known for his homely humor and witty sayings. The following anecdotes, distributed by the United States Information Service illustrate this trait.

In the days when Lincoln was practicing law in Springfield, he accosted a man driving along the road.

"Will you have the goodness to take my overcoat to town for me?" he asked.

"With pleasure," the stranger replied, "but how will you get it back again?"

"Oh, very readily," said Lincoln, "I intend to remain in it."

During the Black Hawk War Lincoln was marching a front of 20 men across a field. A gap in a fence appeared.

"I could not for the life of me," of the big fellow whose little wife Lincoln recalled, "remember the beat him over the head without proper command for getting my men endwise, so that they could get through the gate. So I shouted: 'This company is dismissed for two minutes, when it will fall in again on the other side of the gate!'"

"The man said to others, 'Let her alone. It doesn't hurt me and it does her a power of good.'"

In 1858 an Illinois politician whose undeniable merit was blemished by an overweening vanity, died and his funeral was attended by a large crowd.

"If General... had known how big a funeral he would have," said Lincoln, "he would have died years ago."

Many Lincoln scholars consider this telegram to Gen. McClellan, Oct. 24, 1862, as a masterpiece of satire:

"I have just read your dispatch about sore tongued and fatigued horses. Will you pardon me for asking what the horses of your army have done since the Battle of Antietam that fatigues anything?"

Gentleness rides the features of Abraham Lincoln, in this formal portrait made from the original photograph by Mathew Brady in 1864. The picture was secured from the National Archives.

Is Lincoln A Myth?

Are we trying to make a thin myth out of Lincoln. I doubt that we can, even if we wanted to. We have Carl Sandburg's "Prairie Years" and "War Years," and we have the Gettysburg Address.

We have more than abundant material to prove that the Lincoln we know walked, talked, joked and won elections.

If we emphasized every fact about Lincoln that runs contrary to our formal faith, I do not think it would make one whit of difference.

Americans will read Carl Sandburg's "Lincoln" forever and teachers will insist that students learn the Gettysburg Address because it is a magnificent illustration of American Letters.

I think we would be just as proud of Lincoln, no matter what. And that is what makes us contradictory.

I do think that sometimes we disguise Lincoln's greatness by trying to pretend that he was some sort of romantic hillbilly. The reason for this is that Lincoln is not yet remote history.

And because he is not yet remote history, it amazes us that this country could have produced a Lincoln. For here, as Edwin Stanton, his Secretary of War, is supposed to have said, is a man who "now belongs to the ages."

More than an American embodiment, Lincoln was a supremely moral man. I think we shall have to put aside our romanticizing about Lincoln.

He was not simply a raw-boned son of the Illinois frontier. He was a superior man and all of us can be quite sure he was aware of this. Lincoln's published writings run to eight full volumes. In his youth he wrote poetry, nor were they clumsy rhyming couplets.

Lincoln was the only President, says Edmund Wilson, who could just as easily have been a writer. Lincoln, it cannot be denied, was an intellectual. Not the parlor chair variety but a moral intellectual.

★ ★ ★

The Moral Issue

When Lincoln and Douglas began their great debates, he pulled the shrewdest of all political and intellectual tricks. Douglas wanted to argue about the political and economic factors surrounding slavery.

There was much to be said for his side. Abolition, argued Douglas, would bring economic hardship upon the South and tear the country apart politically (an argument, by the way, that has not yet lost its value).

Lincoln didn't meet these arguments. Instead he made slavery into a moral issue and Douglas had no defense against this. The argument was too telling because it was so simple.

Lincoln was so much the moral intellectual that we see the Civil War now as he saw it then—as an almost Biblical conflict between right and wrong.

Of course, there are people who say that Lincoln's martyrdom made him a hero. John Wilkes Booth's bullet put Lincoln into the Hall of Fame.

Well, it's never nice to be assassinated, but if assassination puts you into the Hall of Fame, I know 20 men who would jump at it tomorrow.

But men don't become heroes by virtue of their death, but by virtue of their life. Garfield and McKinley were both assassinated, but they are only historical facts.

If Lincoln's assassination enlarged him at all, it was because it proved that he, too, was willing to pay that last full measure of devotion.

Let's Recall 'Flourishing' Wit Of Abe

It's Amazing How This Country
Could Have Produced A Lincoln

2-12-1959

Mr. Golden, a Charlotte resident, is editor and publisher of 'The Carolina Israelite' and author of the best seller, 'Only in America'. His weekly column, starting today in The Observer, is being published by many leading newspapers over the nation. They include the New York World Telegram, Philadelphia Inquirer, Chicago Tribune, Boston Globe, Pittsburgh Press, Atlanta Journal and Constitution, and The Miami News. Press, Atlanta Journal and Constitution, and The Miami News.

By HARRY GOLDEN

Part of the charm of the American people is in our ambivalence, and the contradictions show up no place better than in our regard for Abraham Lincoln. For example: Ask any man in the street and he will say, "There are things we should not joke about and times when we should not joke at all." And all agree.

Yet Abraham Lincoln, whom we regard as a genuine American hero, had a wit that flourished all during his lifetime. He explored every subject with it and he did not bury it because there was a Civil War raging.

We are also a pious people. In my own South, everybody goes to church on Sunday. And up North, all the preachers, priests, and rabbis say that we are having a new birth of religious enthusiasm.

We mean that everybody ought to go to a place of religious worship. One of our favorite paintings is George Washington kneeling in prayer at Valley Forge. Yet Lincoln professed no creed.

We hold romance sacred. Let Lincoln ran out once on his bride.

We count our ancestors and make all of them respectable, and many a man has been known to shade the truth about a reprobate uncle.

Yet Lincoln was quite sure his mother was the illegitimate daughter of a Virginia planter.

In a country highly opposed to socialism, we forget that our most respected Republican President once wrote a letter of praise to Karl Marx when "Das Kapital" was published.

Golden



The Ottawa Journal
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
February 24, 1959

LAUGHTER.

Sirs:—Your item in Thursday's Journal on the laughter evoked by Deputy Speaker Sevigny's remark recalls an incident in a meeting of President Lincoln's Cabinet during the Civil War.

It seems that Mr. Lincoln had told one of his appropriate stories to emphasize a point and Secretary Seward remarked that he did not think it proper to laugh when men were on the battlefields. The President replied: "You know Mr. Seward, if I couldn't laugh I think that I would die too".

J. N. STEPHENSON,
Editor-in-Chief.
Pulp and Paper
Magazine of Canada.
Gardenvale, Que.,
Feb. 19.



What Made Abraham Lincoln Laugh



Funny Stories President's Delight, Staid Objections No Deterrent

Abraham Lincoln's usually sorrow-laden countenance belied his highly active sense of humor and lively wit.

By CLARK KINNAIRD
Hearst Headline Service Special to The Times-Union

Some staid members of his Cabinet felt it undignified for President Lincoln to inject homely humor so frequently into his speeches, public statements, and conferences at the White House.

Lincoln commented to a friend:

"They say I tell a great many stories; I reckon I do, but I have learned from long experience that plain people, take them as they run, are more easily influenced through the medium of a broad and humorous illustration than any other way; and what the hypocritical few may think, I don't care."

He also explained, "a funny story, if it has the element of genuine wit, has the same effect on me that I suppose a good square drink of whisky has on an old toper; it puts new life into me. The fact is that I have always believed that a good laugh was good for both the mental and the physical digestion."

Choice Stories

Here are some choice Lincoln stories, as found in his letters or speeches, or recorded by biographers:

Lincoln referred jocularly to his homeliness: "When I was two months old I was the handsomest child in Kentucky, but my Negro nurse swapped me off for another boy just to please a friend who was going down the river whose child was rather plain-looking."

Lincoln repeated, with delight, the story of the country hick who stepped up to an aristocratic-looking lady and told her: "Jeepers creepers, but you sure are a handsome looking woman." She snap-

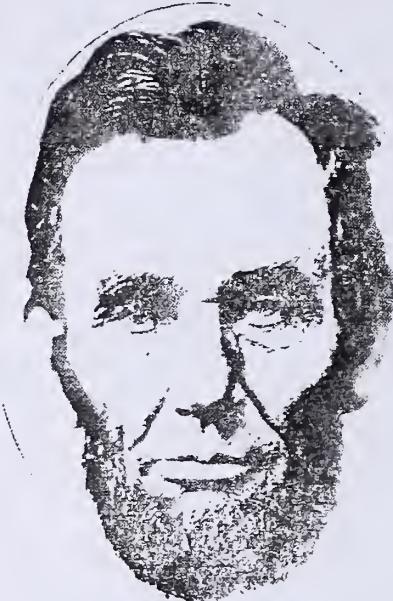
ped haughtily to the stranger, "You could, lady, if you were wearing a hat as I am."

Asked by officer-seekers, Lincoln said, "I am like a man busy in letting rooms at the end of his house that he can't stop to put out the fire that is burning up the other."

Boyhood Logic

Once the conflicting demands made on him reminded Lincoln of his two boys, Tad and Willie, when small. "One will play the other wanted to be dandored for. At last I told him to let his brother have it in order to quiet him. The boy blurted out, 'But I must have it to quiet my self!'"

An old Illinois acquaintance of Lincoln's called upon him with a view to securing a profitably war contract. Lincoln



told him that contracts were not what they used to be. "In fact," Lincoln said, "they remind me of a piece of meadowland in the Sangamon bottoms during a drought." "How was that?" the contract seeker asked. "Why," said Lincoln, "the grass was so short they had to lather it before they could mow it."

Lincoln told of a youth who emigrated from New York to the West and soon wrote back to his father, who was something of a politician. "Dear Dad: I have settled here and like it first rate. Do come out here, Dad, for almighty mean men get office here."

General Nonsense

A guest at the White House in 1862 asked the President how large the Confederate Army was. "About 1,200,000 men," he answered. "That big?" the inquirer exclaimed in astonishment. "Yes," said Lincoln, "Whenever one of our generals is licked, he says that he was outnumbered three or four to one, and we have 400,000 men."

Referring to claims that persons usually made to him about their virtues, Lincoln told of a Governor who, while visiting a state prison, listened to pleas of inmates.

2-12-60

The governor heard story after story of wrongful arrest and undeserved confinement.

There was one man who admitted his guilt and the justice of his sentence. "I must pardon you," the Governor said. "I can't have you in here corrupting all these good men."

Displeased by Lincoln's actions, Senator Ben Wade of Ohio stormed into the President's office at the White House to declare, "Mr. President, this administration is on its way to hell—on the way to hell, sir; it is only a mile away from it."

"Why, Wade," Lincoln responded mildly, "that's the exact distance from here to the Capitol."

In Our Town

By James Smart

EVERY YEAR ABOUT THIS TIME, I get down off the shelf an old brown book with a beat-up color picture of Abraham Lincoln pasted on the cover.

It's called "Lincoln's Own Yarns and Stories, edited by Col. A. K. McClure."

I found it on a junk pile in a barn in Bucks County in 1939.

The editor was Colonel Alexander K. McClure, former Philadelphian, leather tanner, legislator, newspaper publisher, a founder of the Republican Party and an expert poker player.

The leaf with the date, if there was one, is missing but I know it was published between 1901 and 1909.

Colonel McClure would have been in his 80s then. He was an old friend and admirer of Lincoln, and he collected some 400 pages of Lincoln anecdotes.

The whole charm of the book is that most of the stories aren't very funny, and not many of them are even very interesting. Consequently, they aren't the same old Lincoln stories you always read at this time of year.

ONE OF THE BETTER ONES tells of a neighbor who came upon Lincoln with two of his boys, both crying, and asked what was the matter.

"Just what's the matter with the whole world," Lincoln replied, "I've got three walnuts, each wants two."

There's a story of Lincoln becoming annoyed with General McClellan's repeated calls for more troops.

"If I gave McClellan all the men he asks for," Lincoln said, "they couldn't find room to lie down. They'd have to sleep standing up."

After a confederate raid, the book says, Lincoln was told that a brigadier general and 110 horses had been captured.

"Well," he said, "I am sorry for the horses. I can make a brigadier general in five minutes, but it is not easy to replace 110 horses."

McCLURE TELLS ABOUT BEING teased by Lincoln at the time when General Sherman marched off toward Savannah with his 60,000 men and wasn't heard from for a month.

"I was leaving the room," McClure tells it, "and just as I reached the door the President turned around and, with a merry twinkling of the eye, inquired, 'McClure, wouldn't you like to hear something from Sherman?'"

McClure said he certainly would, and waited for the news. Lincoln, he says, burst out laughing and said:

"Well, I'll be hanged if I wouldn't myself."

The tale is told of Lincoln renting a slow horse, and later asking the livery stable man if he kept that horse for funerals.

"No," said the man.

"Well, I'm glad of that," said Lincoln, "for if you did you'd never get a corpse to the grave in time for the resurrection."

And when the Cabinet discussed having "In God We Trust" printed on the back of currency, Lincoln said: "If you are going to put a legend on the greenback, I would suggest that of Peter and Paul: Silver and gold have we not, but what we have we'll give you."

McClure says that Lincoln's humor was "a safety valve, as an escape and entire relief from the fearful actions his endless duties put upon him."

He never tried golf.



Colonel McClure's
Friend

City Life

By
Joe Beamish

"If this is coffee, please bring me some tea; but if this is tea, please bring me some coffee," said Abraham Lincoln.

Another Lincoln story, thanks to A. J. L. Several city officials, including a mayor, attended the

funeral of a top office holder who passed away suddenly. Among those present was another office seeker who had been seeking promotion for some time. He asked the mayor if he could take

Beamish the dead man's place. "I haven't any objections," the mayor replied, "if the undertaker is willing."

"My father taught me to work," said A. Lincoln; "he did not teach me to love it."

Birthday greetings to Lincoln (Whitley) Douglas of Parish who agrees with Dale that "life begins at 40." B-day good wishes to Mrs. Madeline White of 130 Maple Manor, North Syracuse, Charles Hughes of 316 Hixson Ave., Peter DiFulio of 241 North Ave., and Linda Rusch of 112 Clover Rd., who is 13 years old today.

"It's a good rule never to send a mouse to catch a skunk or a polliwog to tackle a whale," said Lincoln.

Top billing in this corner will always go to any Boy Scout who has been awarded The Eagle. Sunday evening, Jerry

Sabloski, Edmund Belak and Stanley Chorazy, of Unit 76, received their Eagle awards. Congratulations.

"It has been my experience that folks who have no vices have very few virtues," said Abe Lincoln.

What you don't know about people you do know . . . C. Robert Staats, formerly in our town with the U.S. Navy recruiting office, is now Marine Service Representative, Division of Motor Boats, N.Y.S. Conservation Department, State Campus Site, Albany. If you need help with your boating problems Bob will help you . . . Floyd Adams, a Williamstown and Redfield boy who has made good selling cars, is now with win Gurney Pontiac.

"I was not accustomed to flattery," said Abe Lincoln. "I was like the Hoosier who loved gingerbread better than any man and got less of it."

Ed Nolan seems to be enjoying the west, especially Las Vegas and Denver. He postal cards, "Joe, you could pick up a column or two here."

"When you've got an elephant by the hind legs and he is trying to run away, it's best to let him run," said Lincoln.

The AA Service Center announces that members of Sobriety Unlimited from Mt. Vernon, will be special guests at the next Open Meeting of Alcoholics

Anonymous, at the Niagara-Mohawk auditorium, Sunday, Feb. 17, at 8 p.m.

"My politics are short and sweet, like the old woman's dance," said Honest Abe.

Headquarters, Syracuse Group, Civil Air Patrol, Auxiliary of the U.S.A.F. announces a change-of-command and smorgasbord, Thursday, 7:30 p.m., at the Palmer House (next door to Canastota Airport), Route 5, Canastota.

"No man has a good enough memory to make a successful liar," said Lincoln.

The Good Neighbor Dept., Clarence Hoag, who was recently named Westvale's Good Neighbor of the Year, attributed his winning the award to his work in 1962, with the Red Cross Blood Donor program. He was chairman of the Westvale area for a five-community mobile, held at Robinson Memorial Church, when 250 pints of blood were donated and 91 first time donors appeared. Clarence is also active in the Knights of Columbus, the Westvale Club and other community organizations.

Honest statesmanship is the wise employment of individual meanness for the public good," said Lincoln.

A New Jersey congressman called on President Lincoln with two of his constituents. "Mr. President," said he, "this is Mr. X. and Mr. Y, and they are among the weightiest men in Southern New Jersey." After they had gone Lincoln said, "I wonder that end of the state didn't tip up when they got off it."

Abe Lincoln's Sense Of the Humorous

By PAUL JONES, of the Editorial Page Staff

The solicitude of the Democrats for the health and welfare of all extends even to the well-being of their political opponents. At times they are concerned lest the GOP become so weak that it will no longer function as an adequate sparring partner.

This is not new. Before the Republican Party existed, the Jacksonians used to shake their heads, in a public and irritating way over the failing strength of the Whig Party, hopelessly divided, they said, by warring factions.

In 1848, among those who took note of the crocodile tears shed by Democrats was the Honorable Abraham Lincoln (Whig, Illinois). On July 27, after the Philadelphia Convention that nominated Zachary Taylor for the Presidency, Mr. Lincoln rose in the House and delivered himself of a few remarks on politics. He said:

"The Democrats are kind enough to frequently remind us that we have some dissensions in our ranks. Our good friend from Baltimore (Mr. McLane) expressed some doubt the other day as to which branch of our party General Taylor would ultimately fall into the hands of. That was a new idea to me.



A Story Recalled

"I knew we had dissenters, but I did not know they were trying to get our candidate away from us. I would like to say a word to our dissenters, but I have not the time. Some such we certainly have: have you none, gentlemen Democrats? Is it all union and harmony in your ranks? No bickerings? No divisions? If there be doubt as to which of our divisions will get our candidate, is there no doubt as to which of your candidates will get your party?"

It would not have been Lincoln speaking if the situation hadn't reminded him of a story, one of those thigh-slapping yarns that he first heard from the lawyers on circuit, gathered around the chunk stove in a county seat hotel lobby in pioneer Illinois.

"I have heard some things from New York," Mr. Lincoln continued (and the words might apply today). "If they are true, we might well say of your party there, as a drunken fellow once said when he heard the reading of his indictment for hog stealing. The clerk read on till he got to and through the words, 'did steal, take and carry away ten boars, ten sows, ten shoats and ten pigs,' at which he exclaimed: 'Well, by golly that is the most evenly divided gang of hogs I ever did hear of.' "

Buffoonery Deplored

Congressman Lincoln concluded: "If there is any gang of hogs more evenly divided than the Democrats of New York, I have not heard of it."

After he became President, Old Abe still was constantly reminded of stories which he could not resist telling. It is a matter of record that the members of his Cabinet, mostly solemn, earnest men, deplored such buffoonery. There were occasions when Stanton left the room in a marked manner, to show his disapproval. Lincoln said nothing; probably felt sorry for a man who didn't appreciate a joke.

During the war, when Lincoln haunted the telegraph room at the War Department, he exchanged stories with the army operators. "His sense of the ridiculous," one of them

said later, "was exceedingly keen, his memory surprising, and his power of illustration, and even of mimicry, was often demonstrated in the use of very simple, sometimes funny, and sometimes undignified stories."

Here is one. Major Eckert, in charge of the office, was counting the cash when Lincoln wandered over from the White House on his daily visit. "Eckert," he said, "every time I see you you're counting money. How does that happen?"

"A mere coincidence Mr. President."

Needed a Barkley

"That reminds me of a story about a man that was driving an open buggy through the countryside in a pouring rain at night. He was passing a farmhouse, when a window opened, and a drunk shouted: 'Hullo there!' The man in the buggy stopped and asked what was wanted. The drunk said: 'Nothing—from you.' The other, sitting in his buggy in the drenching rain, got mad. He said: 'What the devil do you mean, shouting "Hullo!" when people are passing?' The drunk said owlily: 'Well, what the devil do you mean, passing by when people are shouting "Hullo!"?'

If Lincoln told that to Seward and Stanton, we can see them staring severely at him through their spectacles. The story is manifestly absurd, and for the literal mind, pointless. What Lincoln needed in that Cabinet was somebody like the late Alben Barkley, also Kentucky born, and endlessly fertile in ridiculous anecdotes. But would they ever have got any work done?

July 1967

pany the supposedly accredited messengers to Lincoln, but he discovered that they were without the proper credentials.

Lincoln next wrote a "To Whom It May Concern" statement dated July 18, 1864. It follows:

Executive Mansion
Washington, July 18, 1864

To Whom it may concern:

Any proposition which embraces the restoration of peace, the integrity of the whole Union, and the abandonment of slavery, and which comes by and with an authority that can control the armies now at war against the United States will be received and considered by the Executive government of the United States, and will be met by liberal terms on other substantial and collateral points; and the bearer, or bearers thereof shall have safe-conduct both ways.

Abraham Lincoln

This statement was carried by John Hay, who arrived at Niagara Falls on the 20th of July, but Greeley's peace efforts were a fiasco. *The New York Tribune* editor had been deceived, and he took his defeat in his little game of diplomacy in a bad spirit.

The President, however, remained consistent in his desire to meet "any persons, anywhere" or to put it differently, "at any time" to discuss conditions that would lead to peace.

"I have learned to face threats on my life philosophically and have prepared myself for anything that might come."

M. L. K.

An account of Lincoln's dream, which may have been a premonition of his approaching death, was first recorded by Ward Hill Lamon in his *Recollections of Abraham Lincoln 1847-1865*, which book was edited by Dorothy Lamon Teillard (his daughter) in 1895, and published by

A. C. McClurg and Company. According to the author, this dream was related by Lincoln "only a few days before his assassination." Lamon stated that he was present with Mrs. Lincoln when the President revealed the following secret of his sub-conscious mind:

About ten days ago, I retired very late. I had been up waiting for important dispatches from the front. I could not have been long in bed when I fell into a slumber, for I was weary. I soon began to dream. There seemed to be a death-like stillness about me. Then I heard subdued sobs, as if a number of people were weeping. I thought I left my bed and wandered downstairs. There the silence was broken by the same pitiful sobbing, but the mourners were invisible. I went from room to room; no living person was in sight, but the same mournful sounds of distress met me as I passed along. It was light in all the rooms; every object was familiar to me; but where were all the people who were grieving as if their hearts would break? I was puzzled and alarmed. What could be the meaning of all this? Determined to find the cause of a state of things so mysterious and so shocking, I kept on until I arrived at the East Room, which I entered. There I met with a sickening surprise. Before me was a catafalque, on which rested a corpse wrapped in funeral vestments. Around it were stationed soldiers who were acting as guards; and there was a throng of people, some gazing mournfully upon the corpse, whose face was covered, others weeping pitifully. "Who is dead in the White House?" I demand of one of the soldiers. "The President," was his answer; "he was killed by an assassin!"

Does history really repeat itself? While these episodes in history are not carbon copies of the political, diplomatic and military maneuvers of 1968, along with the chaos and assassination that marks our troubled times, there are certain overtones which might lead one to believe that history sometimes appears to repeat itself.

Joe Miller's Jests

A favorite yarn that is often told to illustrate Abraham Lincoln's brand of humor concerns the man with a pitchfork and a farmer's dog. According to Frederick Trevor Hill, who wrote *Lincoln The Lawyer*, the occasion when the Illinois attorney told this story was while he was defending a case of assault and battery. It had been proved that the plaintiff had been the aggressor, but the opposing counsel argued that "the defendant might have protected himself without inflicting injuries on his assailant."

With this argument in mind Lincoln said, "That reminds me of a man who was attacked by a farmer's dog, which he killed with a pitchfork. 'What made you kill my dog?' demanded the farmer. 'What made him try to bite me?' retorted the offender. 'But why didn't you go at him with the other end of your pitchfork?' persisted the farmer. 'Well, why didn't he come at me with his other end?' was the retort."

Where did Lincoln get this story which must have proved to be so valuable to him in his assault and battery case? From *Joe Miller's Jests* which was first published in 1739. Henry C. Whitney, in his book *Life on The Circuit with Lincoln*, stated that "He (Lincoln) really liked Joke books, and among others which I know to have been favorites were "Recollections of A. Ward, Showman," "Flush Times in Alabama," Petroleum V. Nasby's letters, and Joe Miller's Joke book. He would read them aloud to whomsoever he could get to listen to him."

The Joe Miller version of the yarn follows: "A Dog coming open-mouth'd at a Serjeant upon a March, he run

Joe Miller's JESTS OR, THE WITS VADE-MECUM. BEING

A Collection of the most Brilliant JESTS; the Politest REPARTEEs; the most Eleg. BONS MOTS, and most pleasant short Stories in the English Language.

First carefully collected in the Company, and many of them transferred from the Mouth of the Eloquent GENTLEMAN, whose Name they bear; and now set forth and published by his lamentable Friend and former Companion, Elijah Jenkins, Esq.

Mol. Jambly INSCRIBED
To those CHOICE-SPIRITS of the AGE,
Captain BODEN, Mr. ALEXANDER POPE,
Mr. Professor LACY, Mr. Orator HENLEY,
and Job BAKER, the Kettle-Drummer.

L O N D O N :
Printed and Sold by T. READ, in Dogwell-Court, White-Friars, Fleet-Street, MDCCLXXIX.

the Spear of his Halbert into his Throat and kill'd him: The Owner coming out rav'd extremely that his Dog was kill'd, and ask'd the Serjeant, *Why, he could not as well have struck at him with the blunt End of his Halbert? So I would*, says he, if

he had run at me with his Tail."

We do not know what edition of *Joe Miller's Jests* Lincoln read. The first and subsequent early editions are real collectors' items. A description of the first edition follows: "(Mottley, John). *Joe Miller's Jests; or the Wit's Vade-Mecum*: being a collection of the most brilliant jests, the politest repartees, the most elegant bons mots, and most pleasant short stories in the English language; first transcribed from the mouth of the facetious gentleman whose name they bear, and now set forth and published by his lamented friend and former companion, Elijah Jenkins, Esq. 8vo, London: Printed and sold by T. Read, 1739." Of the first edition very few perfect copies are known. The book sells today in fair condition from \$750 upward."

For information gathered by Hal-
ket & Laing we must conclude that John Mottley was the compiler. "In the list of English dramatic writers appended to Whincop's *Scanderbeg*, published in 1747, it is stated under Mottley's name, that 'the book that bears the title of *Joe Miller's jests* was a collection made by him from other books, and a great part of it supplied by his memory from original stories recollected in his former conversations.' Joe Miller himself was a comic actor, who made his first appearance at Drury Lane Theatre on the 30th April, 1715; in 'The constant couple'; he died on the 16 of August 1738."

The Lincoln Foundation's copy is a facsimile of the rare first edition of 1739 which was published in London about 1870.



Lincoln Lore

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Mary Jane Hubler, Editorial Assistant. Published each month by the
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Number 1704

THE LAST BOOK LINCOLN READ

J.G. Randall said of Lincoln that the "continual interweaving of good fun in his writings and speeches shows that humor was no mere technique, but a habit of his mind." His fondness for humorous writers was lifelong. All students of Lincoln's tastes in reading note his affection for such humorists as Orpheus C. Kerr (a pun on "office seeker" and the pseudonym of Robert H. Newell). Petroleum V. Nasby (the pseudonym of David Ross Locke) was another favorite. The day Lincoln first presented the Emancipation Proclamation to his Cabinet, he began the meeting by reading "High Handed Outrage in Utica," a humorous piece by Artemus Ward (the pseudonym of Charles Farrar Browne). Lincoln's penchant for reading aloud from comical books apparently persisted to his dying day, when he regaled old friends with anecdotes from *Phoenixiana*; or, *Sketches and Burlesques*.

John Phoenix was the pseudonym of George Horatio Derby. Born in Dedham, Massachusetts, in 1823, Derby graduated from West Point in 1846. He served with distinction in the Mexican War and later led several exploring expeditions in the West, mostly in California. A wit and a notorious practical joker, he first gained literary distinction in California in 1853, when he was put in temporary charge of the *San Diego Herald*, a Democratic newspaper. Derby was a Whig in politics, one of a great tradition of Whig humorists, and he quickly turned the newspaper on its head politically. California howled with laughter. In 1856 he published *Phoenixiana*, a collection of humorous sketches which became immediately popular.

Naturally, Lincoln was attracted to the Whig humorist. In his debate with Stephen A. Douglas at Freeport on August 27, 1858, Lincoln charged his opponent with inconsistency on the question of the power of states to exclude slavery from their limits. Douglas, Lincoln insisted, had once charged that the Democratic administration of James Buchanan was conspiring "to rob the States of their power to exclude slavery from their limits." Douglas withdrew the charge when Robert Toombs of Georgia stated that only one man in the Union favored such a move.

It reminds me of the story [Lincoln continued] that John Phoenix, the California railroad surveyor, tells. He says they started out from the Plaza to the Mission of Dolores. They had two ways of determining distances. One was by a chain and pins taken over the ground. The other was by a "go-it-ometer" — an invention of his own — a three-legged instrument, with which he computed a series of triangles between the points. At night he turned to the chain-man to ascertain what distance they had come, and found that by some mistake he had merely dragged the chain over the ground without keeping any record. By the "go-it-ometer" he found he had made ten miles. Being skeptical about this, he asked a drayman who was passing how far it was to the plaza. The drayman replied it was just half a mile, and the surveyor put it down in his book — just as Judge Douglas says, after he had made his calculations and computations, he took Toombs' statement.

The reporters covering the speech noted that "Great laughter" followed.

The Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum recently acquired a copy of *Phoenixiana*, notable because it belonged to David Davis, Lincoln's friend and Judge for the Eighth Judicial Circuit. Davis wrote his name and the date, "March 28th . . . 1856," in pencil on the back of the frontispiece. The Sangamon County Circuit Court was then in session in Springfield, and Lincoln argued before the Court that day. One cannot help speculating that Judge Davis very likely showed the book to his friend.

If Lincoln owned a copy of *Phoenixiana* himself, its present location is unknown. It seems likely that he did, however. The description of Lincoln's last day by Katherine Helm, Mary Todd Lincoln's niece, mentions the book. After their carriage ride in the late afternoon, President and Mrs. Lincoln separated. The President entered the White House with Richard J. Oglesby, the Governor of Illinois, and some other political friends. According to Miss Helm, Governor Oglesby later recalled:

Lincoln got to reading



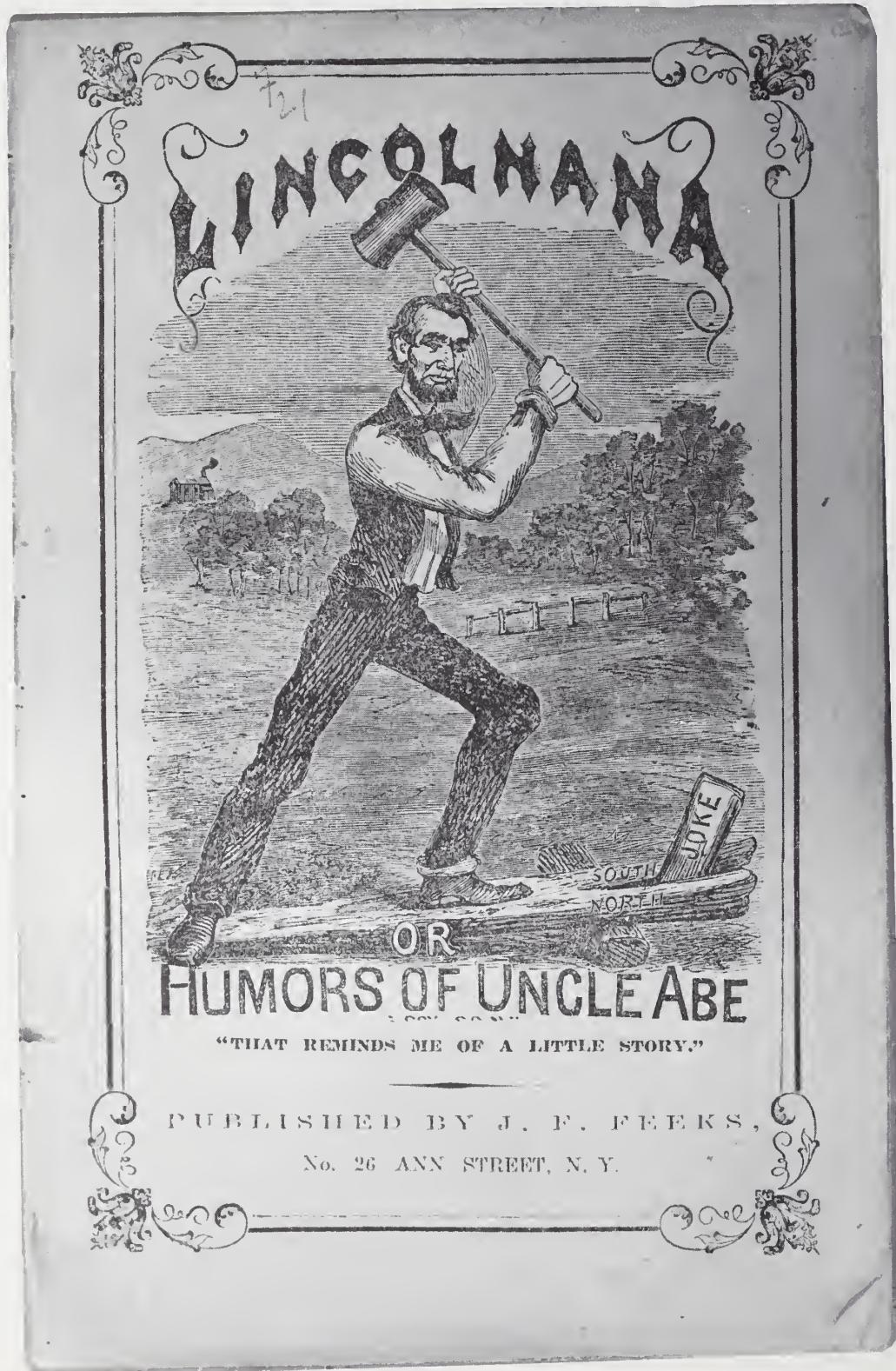
Yours respectfully
John P. Squibob

From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 1. The frontispiece of *Phoenixiana*, shown above, has this note printed under it: "This autograph may be relied on as authentic, as it was written by one of Mr. Squibob's most intimate friends."

some humorous book — I think it was by "John Phoenix." They kept sending for him to come to dinner. He promised each time to go, but would continue reading the book. Finally he got a sort of peremptory order that he must come

to dinner at once. It was explained to me by the old man at the door that they were going to have dinner and then go to the theater.



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 2. *Lincolnana* was one of several cheap paperbacks published during the Civil War which capitalized on the President's reputation for enjoying humor. Though this trait endears Lincoln to us today, it was not universally admired in his own day. Note that the cover of this book shows him splitting the Union with a joke. Lincoln was often pictured as a vulgar jokester, too small for the great office he occupied.

columns

Abe Lincoln

Man of common sense and humor

THE TWELFTH of this month is, of course, Abraham Lincoln's birthdate. Few leaders of our country have been more vilified and misunderstood during their lifetime and more revered and misunderstood after their death than this 16th president of these United States.

He was neither an illiterate country bumpkin who slouched onto the stage of history by way of droll stories and a rude appeal to the people of the Western waters nor a saintly messiah-figure of continuous wisdom and infinite patience. Abraham Lincoln wrestled with poverty, depression often bordering on despair, family tumult, a face and figure that would be the despair of any public relations firm today, not to mention the terrible internal conflict that threatened the very term "United" States of America.

Two of the qualities that may have helped this strange, burdened, unflinching man survive were his fundamental common sense and his native sense of humor. How often do we encounter these assets in anyone today?

Common sense and an under-tone of humor are demonstrated in a letter Lincoln once wrote to a relative who asked for a loan. In December 1848, Lincoln sent the following rejection — and sound advice — to his stepmother's son:

"Your request for eighty dollars, I do not think it best to comply with now. At the various times when I



**Wilma
Dykeman**

have helped you a little, you have said to me, 'We can get along very well now,' but in a very short time I find you in the same difficulty again.

"Now this can only happen by some defect in your conduct. What that defect is, I think I know. You are not lazy, and still you are an idler. I doubt whether since I saw you, you have done a good whole day's work, in any one day. You do not very much dislike to work, and still you do not work much, merely because it does not seem to you that you could get much for it.

"This habit of uselessly wasting time, is the whole difficulty. It is vastly important to you, and still more so to your children, that you should break this habit. It is more important to them, because they have longer to live, and keep out of an idle habit before they are in it, easier than they can get out after they are in.

"You are now in need of some ready money; and what I propose is, that you shall go to work 'tooth and nail,' for somebody who will give you money for it. Let father

and your boys take charge of your things at home — prepare for a crop, and make the crop, and you go to work for the best money wages that you can get. And to secure you a fair reward for your labor, I now promise you that for every dollar you will, between this and the first of May, get for your own labor ... I will then give you one other dollar.

"By this, if you hire yourself at ten dollars a month, from me you will get ten more, making twenty dollars a month for your work. In this, I do not mean you shall go off to St. Louis, or the lead mines or the gold mines in California, but I mean for you to go at it for the best wages you can get close to home — in Coles County.

"Now if you will do this, you will soon be out of debt, and what is better, you will have a habit that will keep you from getting in debt again. But if I should now clear you out, next year you will be just as deep in as ever. You say you would almost give your place in Heaven for \$70 or \$80. Then you value your place in Heaven very cheaply...

"You have always been kind to me, and I do not now mean to be unkind to you. On the contrary, if you will but follow my advice, you will find it worth more than eight times eighty dollars to you. Affectionately, Your brother, A. Lincoln."

Wilma Dykeman, author and state historian, is a longtime News-Sentinel columnist.

Recalling Lincoln's wit

by Robert J. Hastings

Why have so many books been written about Lincoln? One reason must be his wit and humor, reflected in his folksy witticisms with which the common people identified.

Lincoln claimed that a "good story is like a fire in my bones."

He said, "I often avoid a long and useless discussion by others or a laborious explanation on my own part by a short story that illustrates my point of view."

In 1863, the *New York Herald* called him an "American Aesop."

Although Lincoln is not credited with saying it, he doubtless would have agreed with the claim that "all good writers and all good speakers have one thing in common: they know how to tell a story."

Our word "story" comes from the Latin, *storia*, meaning a picture. So think of a story as a picture expressed in words rather than oils or watercolors. American Indians who spoke the Athabascan language would compliment a good storyteller with the words, "Chuysch wantec," meaning, "Chop off half

man of means, Lincoln observed, "I reckon he ought to be — he's about the meanest man in town."

"I'm like the little boy who slumped his toe: hurt too much to laugh and to big to cry."

"I want it said of me that I plucked a thistle and planted a flower where I thought a flower would grow."

"If Minnehaha means 'Laughing water,' then Minneboohoo must mean 'Weeping Water.'"

He described one lady as looking like "last year's bean bag stuck into a long meal bag." And when commenting on the delays in conscripting soldiers, he said it was "like shoveling fleas across a barnyard: half of them never get there!"

He once described a pair of pantaloons offered for sale by a Yankee peddler as "large enough for any man small enough for any boy."

Describing his frustrations at holding the Union together, he said he "felt like a man letting (renting) rooms at one end of the house, while the other end of the house is on fire."

He referred to someone who didn't know what he was doing as "a blind horse on a treadmill." And he compared pompous persons to "arostierin a dress parade."

One story is about a fellow in Springfield who supposedly hired Lincoln to collect a \$2.50 debt. It wasn't so much the amount but the principle involved that made the creditor determined to collect. So although Lincoln said he'd need \$10 to take the case, the creditor agreed, since he wanted satisfaction as much as the money. Lincoln quickly settled the case out of court by offering to give the debtor \$5, providing he would use \$2.50 of it to repay his debt. Lincoln then pocketed the other \$5 for his fee. Everyone was happy. The creditor got the pleasure of recovering his \$2.50 (although it cost him \$10 to do so). The debtor made \$2.50 for repaying the \$2.50 he owed. And of course Lincoln collected his \$5 fee with practically no effort on his part. Who knows? Lincoln may have stretched this story each time he told it. But it is a good example of 19th Century humor, poking fun at the naivete of certain folks.

Many authors have published collections of Lincoln's humor. One of the most recent is an 80-page softbound book, "Cliff Hangers," compiled by retired librarian Elizabeth B. Canterbury of Springfield (which also includes down-to-earth sayings from other sources).

It is impossible to single out the witticisms of a prolific speaker like Lincoln and say which were original. Most were probably picked up or adapted. Here are a few:

"When I hear a man preach a sermon, I like to see him act as if he were fighting bees."

Asked whether a neighbor was a



"That blower can compress the most words in the fewest ideas of any man I ever knew . . ."

Reprinted with permission of the publisher.

Capture Lincoln's spirit

It may be that the spirit of Abraham Lincoln remains in the state that nurtured him. If so, that explains the evolution of Phillip Wagner from businessman in office equipment to publisher of books about the 16th President.

"I wanted to preserve the Lincoln heritage in my hometown of Athens, a small community of 1,100 between New Salem and Springfield," Wagner says.

"This is the area where young Abe developed many of his brilliant talents," Wagner says. "Lincoln the student borrowed books from Col. Matthew Rogers of Athens; Lincoln the surveyor relocated four miles off the old 'Post' road, and his bench mark remains in the middle of Main Street. Lincoln the postmaster picked up mail in Athens in times of high water on the Sangamon River; Lincoln the lawyer was retained by Col. Rogers and Lincoln the politician made his first speech in Athens the third time he ran for the State Legislature."

Athens also is the spot where Lincoln celebrated the move of the Illinois State Capitol from Vandalia to Springfield with fellow members of "the long nine," a group of nine state legislators, averaging over six feet tall, who represented Sangamon County in the 1830s.

An early effort to preserve the site of that celebration, Col. Rogers' general store, ultimately failed, but Wagner preserved paintings that he had commissioned for the site. Since then, Wagner has shared the original paintings by Lloyd Ostendorf, a Dayton, Ohio, artist who specializes in Lincoln as a subject. (Ostendorf is the sculptor who created the statue of Lincoln at the intersection of Western Avenue and Lawrence Street in Chicago.)

One thing led to another. In his work to preserve the Lincoln heri-

tage, Wagner met Betty Canterbury, a retired school teacher and librarian who was working to help Athens to form a volunteer library. Wagner agreed to publish Canterbury's book of folk expressions and brought in artist Ostendorf, who drew Lincoln laughing on Mount Rushmore, suggesting the title, "Cliff Hangers."

Profits from this, and an earlier book of humor published in 1984, are donated to the Athens Library.

So Wagner, the astute businessman, has spent thousands of hours and dollars in his efforts to preserve the Lincoln heritage. Has it been worth the effort?

"All in all, it has been well worth the effort," Wagner says. I think this book takes the reader on a nice little trip both verbally and mentally, helping younger people to better relate to the speech and behavior of earlier times.

"And it brings back to us an image of Lincoln as a young man, the Lincoln we rarely see because no picture was taken of him until he was 37 years old. I think in this book readers will see another side of Lincoln, the man with down-to-earth understanding of people and the man with a sense of humor."



It took three dedicated people to produce this book. From left: Phillip H. Wagner, E.B. Canterbury, Lloyd Ostendorf.

Sayings of Josh Billings.

LIEING.

Az easy az it is to lie, I am astonished that there are so few engaged in the bizz-ness, and that so few fust-rate lies are ever told.

I am not prepared to say how much real sin there iz in what iz kalled a light colored lie, that haz no malis or evil result in it, but I have alwus noticed that the best oy mankind love to excel in awl they undertake, and I can't tell how long a man would be willing to tell white lies for fun when he might be turning an honest penny for himself by telling black ones.

Men don't generally bekum drunkards by confining themselves strictly tow sweet si-der.

Licing is the lowest grade of sin—it is more cowardly than stealing, because there is less risk in it—it is more demoralizing than burglary, bekause there iz no cure for it—it is more dangerous than swearing, be-cause swearing don't hurt enny boddy else—it was the fust sin committed, bekause it was the eaziest and most natral, and it will probably be the last one committed, be-cause no man ever gits so poor and degra-deed but what he kau tell quite a respectable lie...

Licing is sed icw be constitutionall in sum folks—so is the itch constitutionall, because folks hang around where it iz, and won't doktor for it after they get caught by it.

Finally—I might az well own it—I hav told a few very fair lies myself, but i kant reckoleekt of one that I feel proud ov now.

BILLIARDS.

Evrybody seems tew be gitting crazee over a new game, which haz jist bin dis-covered, called billyards.

It iz played on the top ov a table whic iz a little longer than it iz square, and the game seems tew consist in pushin sum round red bawls agin sum' round white bawls, until they drop into sum little pud-ding' bags which are hung on to the outside of the table.

It takes 2 men to play the game, but 4 or 5 kan look on.

They take oph their coats, and stand cluss up tew the table, with a short piece of a fish pole in their brnds, which haz a chalk mark onto the end oy it.

Then one begins, by giving one ov the bawls a punch in the belly, which sends it agin the next one's belly, and so on, till the other fellow's turn for punching comes on.

But yu ought tew see the game; it k^o be delineated by words.

One feller generally beats the o-ther, and then he pays the landlord ov the consarn 25 cents for the prenge of gittin beat, and buys some gin, with lemons in it, and awl hands drink.

Then 2 more takes hold ov the fish poles, and they punch for a spell, and so it goes till 2 o'clock in the morning; then each hum, having enjoyed fine exercies, a little drunk, perhaps, but the muscles in their breast are so expanded that they kant ketch the consumpshun nor the small pox. This is Billaryards.

JOSH BILLINGS.

A young man once called on Abraham Lincoln, and the President asked him how his election campaign was coming along. . . . "Well, Mr. President," he said, "I am getting along pretty well, but out in my district some of my opponents persist in calling me 'the little damned Jew.'"

"Oh, don't mind that," advised Lincoln. "When I was a small boy they called me 'Little Abie,' and you see it never hurt me."

PRESIDENT LINCOLN was asked if it were true that he had said, when someone complained to him that General Grant was drinking, "I must find what brand of whisky he drinks, so I can send a few barrels to the other generals."

Lincoln replied, "No, I didn't happen to say it — but it's a good story, a hardy perennial. I've traced that story as far back as George III and General Wolfe. When certain persons complained to George that Wolfe was mad, George said: 'I wish he'd bite some of the others.'"

— Clara E. Laughlin, *Traveling Through Life*

An Attic Salt Shaker

By W. Orton Tewson

ONCE when a deputation visited Abraham Lincoln and urged emancipation before he was ready, he argued that he could not enforce it, and, to illustrate, asked them:

"How many legs will a sheep have if you call the 'ail a leg?'"

"Five," they answered.

"You are mistaken," said Lincoln, "for calling a tail a leg doesn't make it so."

And that exhibited the fallacy of their position more than any long argument or speech.

◆ ◆ ◆
CHAUNCEY DEPEW always thought he seriously impaired his chance of becoming President of the United States because of his predilection for telling stories.

"While the people want to be amused," he once said, "they have no faith in a man or woman with wit or anecdote. When it comes to the election of men to conduct public affairs they invariably prefer serious men. The only exception to this rule was Abraham Lincoln. But when he ran for President the first time he was comparatively unknown outside his State of Illinois. He could safely tell stories and jokes after he had demonstrated his greatness as President."

◆ ◆ ◆

AFTER Lincoln became President, Mr. Depew was talking to him one day on this very subject: Lincoln said—the conversation is reported in Depew's book, "My Memories of Eighty Years":

"I am accused of telling a great many stories. They say it lowers the dignity of the presidential office, but I have found that plain people—take them as you find them—are more easily influenced by a broad and humorous illustration than in any other way, and what the hypercritical few may think, I don't care."

◆ ◆ ◆

SOME of the best Lincoln stories have been collected by an enthusias-

tic admirer, Anthony Gross, and published under the title "Lincoln's Own Stories." One of the most Lincolnesque has it that Charles Sumner, Senator from Massachusetts, called at the White House early one morning. He was told that the President was downstairs; that he could go right down. He found the President polishing his boots. Somewhat amazed, Sumner said:

"Why, Mr. President, do you black your own boots?"

With a vigorous rub of the brush, the President replied:

"Whose boots did you think I blacked?"

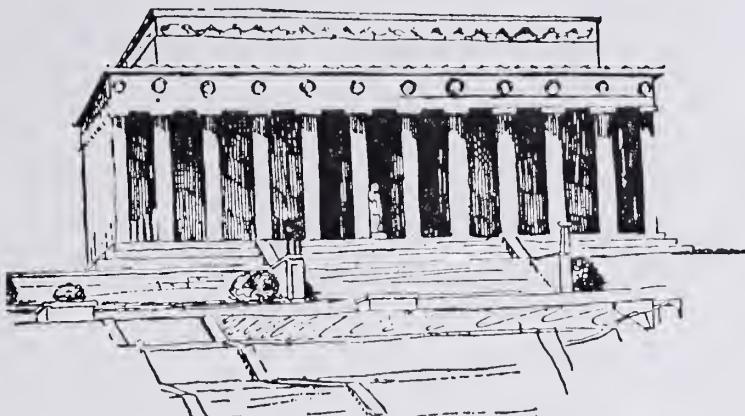
◆ ◆ ◆
A CERTAIN swaggering New Jersey Congressman called on the President with two of his constituents, in order to see Lincoln as they would a show.

"Mr. President," said he, "this is Mr. X, and this is Mr. Y. They are among the weightiest men in Southern New Jersey."

After they had gone, Lincoln said:

"I wonder that end of the State didn't tip up when they got off it."





LINCOLN MEMORIAL

Lincoln's Sense of Humor

by Kirby Page

ABRAHAM Lincoln had the reputation of being the best storyteller of his day. He was never at a loss for an appropriate anecdote and was always ready with a joke. One reason is found in the fact that by nature he was sad and melancholy, and with him humor was a means of release and relaxation.

• • •

Once at the Hotel Astor where the bill of fare was printed in French, Lincoln without hesitation called for a *sine qua non* of beans and an *ipsedixit* of pork. Concerning a voluminous paper submitted to him, he said: "It's like the lazy preacher that used to write long sermons, and the explanation was, he got to writin' and was too lazy to stop."

He once told of the preacher who in a sermon asserted that while our Savior was the only perfect man, there is no record of a perfect woman. Whereupon he was interrupted, "I know a perfect woman." "Who was she?" asked the minister. "My husband's first wife," came the reply.

Lincoln once illustrated a point by reference to a boy who was riding a horse for sale and when asked if the horse had splinters answered: "Well, mister, if it's good for him he has got it, but if it ain't good for him he hasn't."

An experience reminded him of the member of a delegation visiting the state penitentiary who got separated from his party and could not find his way out. Seeing a convict in a cell, he asked the prisoner, "Say! How do you get out of this place?"

• • •

The burden of his office sometimes seemed unbearable. Lincoln felt as though "history had ordered him to straddle a cyclone and ride it if he could." He once told a general: "If to be the head of Hell is as hard as what I have to undergo here, I could find it in my heart to pity Satan himself."

When reproached because he told a funny story in a time of serious crisis, the President replied: "If I couldn't tell these stories I would die."

Lincoln's Humor Leveled Barriers, Sons of Union Veterans Told

Abraham Lincoln was portrayed as a man of broad understanding with a keen knowledge of human nature by Rev. Samuel D. Chambers at the annual Lincoln banquet of Marcus L. Ward Camp No. 18, Sons of Union Veterans, at Achtel Stetter's last night.

Dr. Chambers, who is pastor of the Kilburn Memorial Presbyterian Church, gave an account of Lincoln from the time of his birth until his assassination and touched upon incidents which defined his character.

"We find that Lincoln, in addition to being a man of broad sympathy and a great lover of children, understood human nature and worked his way out of many difficulties by his sense of humor," Dr. Chambers declared. "Although Lincoln never joined a church, he was deeply religious.

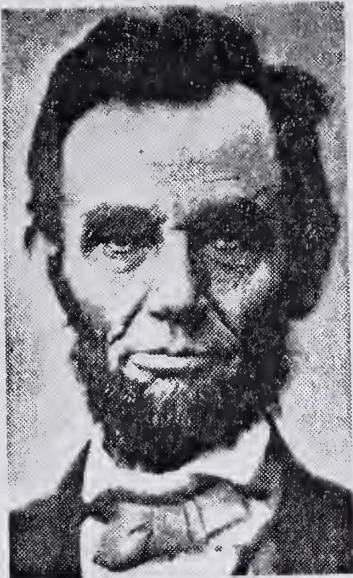
"Through all the acts of his life Lincoln gained for himself the plaudits of mankind and secured for himself an immortality that will cling to his name as long as the sun and moon endure."

Among those who attended the dinner were State Commander Richard F. Bennett of Lambertville, State Junior Vice Commander Charles G. Denman of the local camp, State Treasurer and Secretary George H. Carter of Trenton, Past Division Commander Henry Bender of Union City, State Auxiliary President, Mrs. Mary E. Muirhead of Roselle, Commander Frank L. Merrell of the Ward Camp and Mrs. Carolin Ruff, president of the local auxiliary. Past Commander I. Tracy Mills was toastmaster.

The banquet was arranged by a com-

mittee consisting of Commander Merrell, Charles G. Denman, Harold C. Denman, Howard W. Merrell and Theodore R. Skellenger. Dancing followed the banquet.

KENTUCKIANS IN WASHINGTON by Donie Carmack



War-weary President had way of coining nicknames.

moving van date in '48 at another Washington Democratic address, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

WHEN YOU TOUR the F.B.I.'s public precincts, the guide shows you the equipment that throws light on concealed messages and otherwise exposes objects that are not always what they seem. He explains the F.B.I. used to allow feminine visitors to look at their diamonds through it but, "We had to stop, so many girls had hysterics."

THE harassed president of the Civil War era found time for playful humor even in official business, the Lincoln papers just opened reveal. When indorsing incoming mail, he apparently nicknamed Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles "Ichabod" or "Neptune;" Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton, "Mars;" Francis Preston Blair, Sr., "Father Blair;" and Samuel S. Cox, "Sunset-Cox."

The disclosure reminded The Washington Post that a later war President had the same habit.

In Roosevelt's parlance Harold L. Ickes was "Harold the Ick;" Leon Henderson, "Lenny the Hen"; Thomas Corcoran, "Tommy the Cork"; the late Harry Hopkins, "Harry the Hop"; and Henry Morgenthau, Jr., "Henry the Morgue."

DON'T QUOTE ME

Lincoln Didn't Like Smut for Smut's Sake

By BILL WILDHACK

Today, the day we pay tribute to the memory of Abraham Lincoln, always brings up a few snide remarks from his detractors.

One of their favorite charges is that Lincoln told smutty stories. He did. So what? With all of his genius, he was a product of the crude, rough frontier and, with all his delicate sensibilities, was influenced deeply by his background.



Leonard Swett, an attorney who rode the judicial circuit with Lincoln, writing to the Civil War President's law partner, William H. Herndon, in 1866 said:

"If he told a good story that was refined and had a sharp point, he did not like it any better because it was refined. If it was outrageously low and dirty, he never seemed to see that part of it. If it had a sharp ring of wit, nothing ever reached him but the wit.

"It was the wit he was after, the pure jewel, and he would pick it out of the mud or dirt just as readily as he would from a parlor table."

* * *

Many holders of public office today can appreciate what Lincoln meant when he was asked if he did not find the small duties of office irksome and answered: "Yes, sometimes. In fact, I feel sometimes like a man who was ridden out of town on a rail, and said: 'If it wasn't for the honor of the thing, I'd rather walk.'

* * *

Stephen Douglas in the famous Lincoln-Douglas debates tried to make political capital out of the fact that Lincoln was once a partner in a store that sold liquor.

Lincoln, a known temperance advocate, admitted the charge and added: "Many a time I stood on one side of the counter and sold whisky to Mr. Douglas on the other side, but the difference between us now is this: I have left my side of the counter, but Mr. Douglas still sticks to his as tenaciously as ever."

That ended that.

* * *

Harassed by do-nothing military leaders in the battle to save the Union, Lincoln told P. T. Barnum, promoter of the famous midget Gen. Tom Thumb: "You have some pretty small generals, but I think I can beat you."

* * *

WANT-AD WONDERS^{Trade Mark}

Humor of Abe Lincoln Reflected In Want Ad

Before he became President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln once had a valuable watch stolen. The ad he placed, jokingly directed to the thief, shows the famous humor of the great man:

STOLEN — A watch worth \$100. If the thief will return it he shall be informed gratis where he may steal one worth two of it, and no questions asked.

—A. Lincoln.

\$5 to first sender of each true newspaper Classified Advertising result story we accept. Howard Parish Associates, P.O. Box 126, N.W. Br., Miami 47, Fla.



(incomplete)

too glad to make the same offer to Artemus Ward, if he had believed that he could have induced that redoubtable jester to accept it. Sometimes his humor found expression in a mere statement of facts without any attempt to underscore them. We may be sure that he smiled as he wrote down this memorandum about the desires of the Blakes and the Aikens:

Requests of Mr. James Blake of Indianapolis:

1. Capt. Alken to be promoted.
2. Col. William H. Blake of the 9th be promoted.
3. Col. John W. Blake of the 40th be promoted.
4. That himself—James Blake—have something.

Whether James Blake actually did "have something" the record does not show. One suspects that he did not.

Having in mind the hostility between Thurlow Weed of The Albany Evening Journal and Horace Greeley of The New York Tribune, Lincoln is not sure he ought to let pass a rare occasion on which the two are in agreement. He expresses his doubt quaintly in a letter to Secretary Chase on May 8, 1861, in which he says:

I am told there is an office in your department called "The Superintending Architect of the Treasury Department, connected with the Bureau of Construction," which is now held by a man of the name of Young and wanted by a gentleman of the name of Christopher Adams.

Ought Mr. Young to be removed, and if yea, ought Mr. Adams to be appointed? Mr. Adams is magnificently recommended; but the great point in his favor is that Thurlow Weed and Horace Greeley join in recommending him. I suppose the like never happened before and never will again; so that it is now or never. What say you?

No quotations of new or unfamiliar material in a brief article can give a complete idea of the humor of Abraham Lincoln. We have presented enough, however, to show that the broad anecdote was at least not the sole expression of that humor. Lincoln in this respect has suffered from the ascription to him of a few outstanding stories, not unlike the over-quotation of a few of his sentiments, to the exclusion of everything else. Here a thorough sifting of the genuine from the spurious would be an act of tardy justice. Because Lincoln did tell stories, and told them well, almost every good story of his generation, and some not so good, have been attributed to him. The result is hardly fair and hardly true. Lincoln the humorist was very close to Lincoln the man of infinite patience, tenderness and wisdom. He deserves to be more accurately known.

Time alone will complete the portrait. Lincoln's humor, like his eloquence, will be appreciated by those who seek the true outlines of the man and will be found to have been a safety valve. It saved him when his own troubles and sorrows, coupled with the sore trials of the nation, would have overwhelmed and destroyed an ordinary mortal.

For more on Lincoln's humor, see:

Abraham Lincoln's Personality – Sense of Humor

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DRAWER 6A

HUMOR

HUMOR

